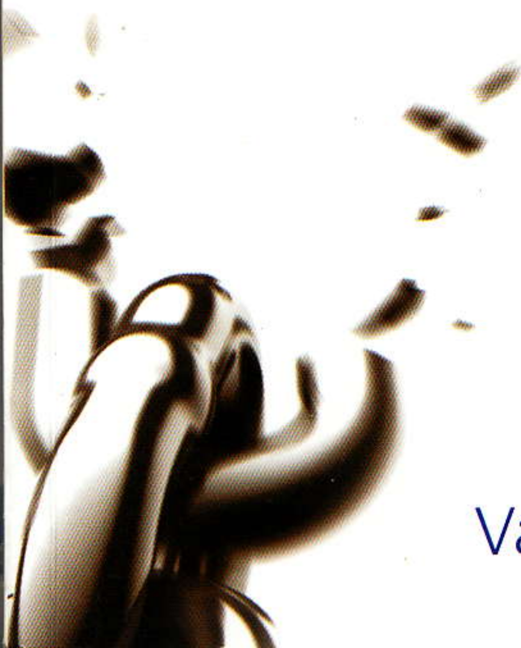


If It Could Happen to Buddha Why Not You?

Understanding the Ancient Secrets of Self Awareness



Vasant Joshi, PhD

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Though the title of this book should grammatically have been If It Could Happen to Buddha, Why Not to You? *we decided to drop the 'to' from the latter part of the title as we wanted the onus of inner transformation to remain on the individual rather than on an outside source.*

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PREFACE

In view of the constraints of time we face today, I feel it is more useful that ideas and discourses be given as briefly as possible to make a point succinctly. The purpose of this book, therefore, is neither to 'teach', nor to 'convince'. It is basically a sharing of what I have learned on the spiritual path and what has helped me in my personal growth. Not all is intended to be covered, nor all is intended to be explained—what is covered is seen as enough to focus on selected aspects of spiritual growth.

The insights shared here have worked for me; maybe they will work for you, too. There are pointers given by enlightened beings. They also show the path, the process, and the potential within us so that we may attain the same state of consciousness that Buddha and many others have attained before. I also feel learning from these insights can prove to be highly educational and encouraging.

I wish to express my gratitude to Dr Earl Anderson, Dean, School of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, Cleveland State University (CSU), for his consideration and support in the publication of this book. The India Scholar Program at

CSU was initiated by Dr K.C. Bhaiji. I am indebted to him for inviting me to teach Eastern Religions and Hinduism under this programme since 1999. I have dedicated this book to the memory of late Dr Bhushan Wadhwa, professor of mathematics at CSU, whose support and care made my participation in this academic programme a personally enriching and rewarding experience. I am equally grateful to CSU and the Indian community of Greater Cleveland for creating the India Scholar Program and having me to contribute to its success.

This book contains various meditation techniques taught by the enlightened mystic and a prolific author, Osho. I have drawn from his vision and techniques because I find them immensely valuable for our times.

Dr Vasant Joshi

INTRODUCTION

It is said, once a young man came to see Gautam Buddha. The man was skeptical about Buddha's enlightenment and divine presence. 'Does the Blessed One teach a path which is new and original?' the man asked.

One of Buddha's close and illustrious disciples, Sariputta, turned his attention from Buddha, looked at the skeptic and said, 'If the Blessed One taught a path that was new and original, He would not be a Blessed One!'

Looking graciously at Sariputta, Buddha smiled and said, 'Well said, Sariputta, well said!'

Being on a spiritual path, I have learned that information can be new or old, but truth is not information. Regardless of who sees the truth—Buddha, Jesus, Kabir, Rumi, Osho, Ramana Maharshi you or I—it comes as an experience which springs forth from one's innermost core. It certainly is not a mind-product.

Reflecting upon Buddha's story, I wonder: can experiences of truth, love, compassion, be 'new' and 'original'? Can love be new or old? Can compassion be ancient or modern? We can say truth is both, old and new, or neither. Love and compassion are fresh,

novel and alive experiences regardless of time and space. Truth simply *is*, love *is*, compassion *is*—their *is-ness* never goes through any mutation. It matures, but never mutates.

Because truth has been seen, discovered, realised so many times, a skeptic can say, 'What is new?' But when Buddha *knows* the truth, the truth known by the sages before him does not become old. In fact, it becomes new again because Buddha has attained it in a new way, in his own way. It is original because it has originated the first time through Buddha. Since truth has been seen so many times, one can easily confuse it with information.

Science is either new or old. When Albert Einstein, for example, finds something, Issac Newton's discovery becomes old. Einstein brings more information; his research brings new facts, which were not known to Newton. Thus we come across new scientific theories, and the Nobel Prize is given in recognition of the novelty of ideas. Buddha is not building upon what seekers have found before him. All that may be relevant for his search, but is not crucial to work with. What others before him found is so personal, so uniquely discovered, that there is no way Buddha could replicate it or recycle it. Buddha's discovery is his individual achievement—very special, very distinct, and very new.

How Gautam Siddhartha became a Buddha is a story of self-transformation, not a chronicle of how information was refined further, applied and disseminated. He never claimed to be other than a human being—earnest, authentic but very ordinary. He attributed his spiritual search, his self-realisation to human effort, human understanding and human intelligence. That every human being is a potential Buddha was not a matter of belief or theory for him, it was his firm conviction based on his own discovery. His ultimate message to humanity is crystallised and coded in two of his powerful declarations: *sammasati*, remember you are a Buddha, and, *appa dipo bhava*, be a light unto yourself.

In the stories and teachings of self-realised beings, such as Buddha and many others before and after him, I find significant pointers, which if understood, made instrumental in one's search, and lived, can help in the evolution of one's consciousness and in the realisation of one's Buddha-hood.

The paths Buddhas have followed may or may not be for everyone, but the processes of awareness, discovery and transformation they went through is intrinsically relevant and valuable to experiencing enlightenment.

For the strategic application of pointers and the process in the pursuit of enlightenment what is also required, I have found, is the preparation led by techniques, skills and methods of meditation, which may create an opening within us to be receptive and available to the pointers and the process.

PART I

POINTERS

CHAPTER 1

WE THE HUMANS

Unchecked industrialisation and urban growth, the culture of consumerism and the explosion in population, the race for nuclear armaments and the increase of religious fundamentalism—all this has brought mankind to the critical point of making a choice: either self-annihilation or self-transformation.

Broadly speaking, some of the current problem areas critically affecting the individual, the society and the environment include:

- Dysfunctional relationships and mental stress
- The withering away of the family structure
- Crime and violence
- Poverty
- Environmental problems, of which there are many

Even a cursory look around the world will show that we have become worshippers of death, disease and destruction. We humans are a strange species. We first create conditions for hurting ourselves, and then we debate and argue; we hold conferences and

summits to find out how to deal with their disastrous effects. We first create situations that drift us into war and violence, and then we go to churches, mosques and temples to pray for peace. We first create dirt, filth, garbage, poisonous gases, and then we talk about ecology and look for environmental safety. The deaf, dumb and blind political machinery has pursued such policies of economic development that have raped the earth and hurt the planet.

Instead of providing leadership to bring about an attitudinal change in the ignorant masses, instead of teaching them and showing them how to develop a scientific way of looking at the human existence, the scientist has been toeing the line of politicians and helping them fulfil their ambitions. Instead of taking a courageous, independent stand and refusing to follow the suicidal direction, the scientist continues to work for the vested interests.

Mother Earth is hurt, people are faced with violence, nations are at each other's throats, drugs are destroying human lives and yet leaders at the helm of religious affairs are behaving like ostriches. What they have been giving are canons, catechism and consolation.

What the world needs is transformation of consciousness. Like politicians, religious leaders also make promises: they promise paradise. But like politicians, they also let the earth be turned into an unspeakable hell.

The fundamental problem facing humanity as a whole is not only that of a polluted environment but also that of polluted minds. Greed and violence, deforestation and global warming, racial and ethnic tensions, religious fundamentalism and blind nationalism are all manifestations of a functionally polluted human mind.

Ecology of the mind, therefore, is the prerequisite for restoring environmental ecology, human dignity and international solidarity. In our frenzy for material gain and worldly power, we

have lost touch with the living bridge—the bridge of feeling and of healthy emotion, which binds human life to the cosmic web of life. We are cut off from Nature and from each other because we are cut off from our own hearts.

Human society has gone through an agricultural revolution, followed by the industrial revolution. Now, experts say, we need to go through an ecological revolution. But none of these revolutions will have any lasting impact and benefit until we can bring about a spiritual revolution—a worldwide recognition that we are the Nature, we are the world, and we are the life.

As we are now in the twenty-first century, looking at the millennium that has passed, we can see a wounded civilisation, a civilisation that needs an enormous amount of healing. How did we become a wounded civilisation? Arthur Koestler says, 'Somewhere along our evolutionary process, we developed a "hardware fault", our brains became "miss-wired", leading us to be born with an inherently violent, aggressive nature.'

Another possibility is that our underlying fault may be what the enlightened mystic, Osho, calls a 'software problem'—a bug, a virus in our thinking, our perception, our attitude, our conditioned behaviour. The real confusion is we don't really know what we want, what our priorities are, and how to go about meeting them.

For example, we want to live, but in the name of nationalism, religion, race and other such divisions, our energy is directed towards death and destruction. We yearn for progress and material growth but the means and methods we apply to achieve them end up destroying the planet's ecological balance, our very life. We show our concern about increasing poverty, but we do very little to control population, to apply vigorous contraceptive methods, or to direct our resources away from building armies and armaments. We talk about freedom and equality in society, but we treat 50 per

cent of the human population, women, as inferior, incompetent 'doormats'. We unashamedly carry our biases, racial prejudices and sense of ethnic superiority.

This schizophrenic state of humanity has its roots in the way we are hypnotised. No wonder we are wounded, we act in a hypnotic state not knowing what we are doing and why we are doing the things we are doing. The sources which cause this hypnosis are diverse in nature and scope. Mainly, however, as individuals and as society on the whole, we are culturally hypnotised, programmed by family, religion, politics, media and the market.

Basically, we are facing a cultural crisis. We have caused wounds to ourselves. We need to heal ourselves. Healing has to begin with oneself; only a healthy individual can help another. One view is, and it is a very common view, change the society, create more laws and law enforcement, change the system and that will bring order, well-being and happiness to all. This view believes there is no need to bother about changing the individual, the inner world; just make the outer world different and it will benefit the individual.

How, one may ask, can an individual, born and brought up in the very society, the system, the structure that has ingrained strong ideas and views, change it? An individual or a group of individuals may revolt against the system, against the socio-political structure, but in most cases it may end up making the same structure, albeit in a different shade of colour, with a different nuance. Fundamentally nothing new will come out of such a revolt.

The Bolshevik Revolution in the former Soviet Union or the Cultural Revolution in China are prime examples of the fact that the very evils they fought against—of political authoritarianism, economic exploitation and human degradation, all came back. Basic human conditions did not alter substantially with changing the old guards and old structures.

Is it natural to be violent, greedy, or angry? Psychologists, including Sigmund Freud, agree that violence, greed and anger are natural to humans. They stop here. When asked to help find a way out, they recommend therapy. One is left to find a solution, which more often than not turns out to be a temporary one, and thus one ends up either going to a shrink or taking alcohol, drugs, or undergoing therapy. All of these rob a person of his responsibility to grow, to transform violence into love, greed into giving, and anger into compassion.

Karl Marx said existence is the essence of being. Society, history and the environment are responsible for what man becomes; the individual himself is not. Man is not to be blamed for his acts. Change the society and that will do man good. Here again, the individual is absolved from his responsibility.

So in essence, Freud and Marx addressed only the actuality of human beings. They never could realise that this actuality as perceived by them can be changed or transformed, and that human potential can be allowed to surface. If human actuality remains what it is then there is no evolution. Only when the inherent potential for growth and transformation is recognised and encouraged does the individual find the scope to evolve.

Only an evolved individual, a healthy individual—not just physically healthy but emotionally and spiritually healthy, one who is healed, who is a whole person and therefore holy—can build a New World, a New World order and a new humanity. Such an individual will live to help others live, will celebrate life to help others celebrate life, will love to help others love.

CHAPTER 2

FOUR STEPS TO HEALING THE SELF AND REACHING THE OTHER

Extend Yourself: *Karuna*

Healing is in giving, not in having. When one gives, one grows and evolves. Not giving charity, but giving oneself—sharing oneself just out of joy. Celebrate in giving; do not give to celebrate. One needs to begin extending oneself and caring at first for the inanimate objects, objects of our daily use: a chair, an umbrella, a computer, a car; whatever the object, one can extend oneself by showing respect and an attitude of not taking it for granted. Then one can begin to show the same respect and recognition to trees, plants, flowers, mountains and rivers. One needs to feel an internal connection with Nature and its manifold display of beauty and grandeur. As one grows, one can then show the same respect, caring and recognition towards animals. An even deeper sense of caring and warmth is needed in interacting with the animal world.

Having learned how to be sensitive towards inanimate objects, Nature and animals, it will be possible to extend oneself with the feeling of respect and recognition, warmth and affection towards a next-door neighbour, a Christian, a Jew, a Hindu, or a Muslim. It is said that St Francis approached every animate and inanimate object with love and gratitude and thanked them for the many ways in which they had filled his life with beauty, joy and well-being. He even thanked his donkey, which had carried him many a mile. At the time of his death he wept and apologised for the times he had been impatient and unkind to his lifelong companion.

Friendliness: *Maitri*

Friendship can lead to dependency; it can lead to enmity. Friendliness is more of an experience of relating rather than having a relationship. It is open-ended; it does not bind the other. Friendliness is not because individuals have common social, religious, or political identities.

Friendliness is possible only when all labels, all identities are effaced. It is a kind of spirit where I would neither consider myself a Christian or a Hindu, nor would I allow you to call me a Christian or a Hindu. To be friendly means to be available, to relate to contribute, or to touch someone's heart. Friendliness is active compassion.

Cheerfulness with Gratitude: *Mudita*

Each moment is a challenge and an opportunity. It is a challenge because each moment is new and full of possibilities. A tense and agitated mind can easily lose sight of something, miss the opportunity and fail to act.

When a moment is welcomed with a relaxed mind and a cheerful heart, with a non-serious attitude, it gives one an

opportunity to transform the quality of living. The moment turns into a blessing. Fighting with darkness leads nowhere; one only needs to bring more and more light with playfulness and a sense of gratitude.

Non-expecting Involvement: *Upeksha*

Our actions are motivated, and motivations are result-oriented. Our impatience, tension and frustration are in proportion to how much we succeed or fail in attaining the result. Whether in a relationship, in our working environment, or in interactions within the family, we function with expectation. We overlook the fact that expectations are intrinsically vulnerable to meeting rejection, pain and failure. The real challenge is to apply all the energy in a given task, to working out interpersonal relationships, to doing what one does best, but without expecting the desired result. Being indifferent towards the outcome and yet remaining totally involved in whatever life brings, is the key to living a relaxed and an unburdened moment.

CHAPTER 3

TWO CHOICES: EGO OR LET GO

We have two choices, two ways to live. We are familiar with one, the way of the ego. In fact, normally we choose the way of the ego. Almost all of our thoughts, feelings and actions are driven by this centre. This centre begins to take shape in childhood. At each successive stage of our physical and psychological development, this centre becomes stronger and stronger. Our goal-oriented, ambition-driven, and success-at-any-cost value system adds to crystallising the ego.

Ego's net is wide and complex. One requires a high state of awareness to see how this formidable entity works and controls our behaviour. Basically, it lays a three-fold trap.

Three Traps of Ego

- **I am the centre:** The seeds of this feeling begin in the formative years of childhood. When parents, relatives and neighbours rush to pay attention to the slightest discomfort

of a child, the child naturally feels he is the centre. All are working for him; he can demand anything, he is the end, all the rest is meant to fulfil his desires. This ego-fulfilling process begins to grow and become an integral part of one's perception of self-importance throughout life. Oscar Wilde was once asked to compile his list of the hundred best books. 'I am afraid', he said, 'that would be impossible.' 'Why?' he was asked. He said, 'Because I have written only five.'

- **My idea, my belief, my way is the best:** We are raised under a certain set of beliefs, certain ways of behaviour. Certain ideas are ingrained in us by family, religious leaders, politicians and teachers. Not only that, we are also told that what is being taught, imparted, conveyed is the best and the greatest in the world. That, compared to what is believed by one's family, society and forefathers for centuries, all other beliefs, ideas and ways are of little value. When this belief system is challenged, one does not hesitate to be aggressive and violent. Osho shares a story that makes this point:

  'A professor and chairman of the department of philosophy at the University of Paris came to his class and said he was the greatest man in the whole world. When students asked how he could prove this, he said, "Tell me, which country is the best and the greatest in the world?" They were all French. They said, "Of course, France! There is no question about it." The professor said, "Which is the greatest city in France?" "Paris, of course, is the best and the greatest city in France," students said.

  'He said, "Much is settled. Now I want to know which institution in the city of Paris is the greatest, and the best?" "Obviously," the students said, "it is the University of Paris."

  'And he said, "Now, things are very simple. Which department in the University is the best and the greatest?"

'The students looked at each other. They had to accept that it was the department of philosophy. How could any other department be greater than the department of philosophy? The professor sat in his chair, and he said, "Now, I am the head of the best of all departments, the department of philosophy, at the greatest institution in the greatest city, Paris, which is in France—the greatest country in the whole world. Do you have any objection to my statement that I am the greatest man in the whole world?"'

- **Ownership:** Again, from childhood, one begins to develop a strong sense of ownership. Regardless of whether it is a toy, a book, a chair, a house, or property, objects get intimately tied with an egoistic sense of possessiveness. Going even further, this feeling of possessiveness extends to people—one's wife, husband, son, daughter, or friend—we begin to possess people, not just objects.

The centre, the path of let go is an unfamiliar one for many. We are living in an age where we show a great deal of skepticism and disbelief. Qualities of trust and compassion, innocence and acceptance are seen as signs of weakness. Asserting one's intellect and mind, power and superiority are viewed with awe and respect. To be important, to be special, and to be recognised as such by others is our measure of success.

The attitude of let go is guided by a totally different understanding of living. It is an attitude where the assertion is not on being a *somebody*, but in view of the vastness of the universe and the immense mystery of life, it is based on a humble realisation that one is actually a *nobody*.

It is recognition of the fact that I am not the centre; the centre is outside somewhere, some thing, for some reason: it may be God, a loved one, a tree, a mountain—anything. The deep feeling is that I am living for *that*. I am not the

end; I am simply a means, a conduit through which life flows. Energetically and existentially the centre is only one. I am only one of the infinite manifesting extensions of it. This let go needs to be on the three planes described here.

Three Ways of Let Go

- **Let go of objects:** We are rarely or never satisfied with objects we own. One can play and pass time and one can have fun with them, but sooner or later one gets tired of it and starts looking for another object. This can go on and on, life after life. Finally the moment comes when one understands that no object is going to fulfil one's desire; and this is the point when one can let go of objects and begin to search for the Divine. God or the Divine means that which brings fulfilment. It is that unknown object, that invisible object which ultimately brings an end to chasing objects.
- **Let go of people:** We exist with a strong sense of having a home, having possessions, and also having relationships. Our 'I' is nothing but a combination of all these dreams, a cumulative effect. Dreams of possessing things, dreams of possessing people—relationships, attachment, love, passion, dreams of the future—all these accumulate and become the ego. When we drop all these, suddenly one disappears; one becomes free in the true sense. And in that disappearance, in that freedom, the law starts functioning in its truest way. That is what the Buddha calls the *Dhamma*, the Tao, the Ultimate Law.
- **Let go of oneself:** A truly aware person is one whose confidence and trust in the Divine is total and complete. 'Whatever *you* will is best for me. *You* are my protection. *You* are the eternal, the formless, and the Almighty,' says the person who is in tune with the Whole. The individual

acknowledges: 'I am but a wave; where is there any question of my will? Thy will be done. Thy will is my will. The wave's desire cannot be different from the ocean's desire; the leaf's desire cannot be different from the tree's desire. In this manner one needs to let go of one's self "like a drop in the ocean."'

So there are three layers of the ego. The first layer consists of our personal world—our house, our car, our bank balance and so on. The second layer consists of our emotional attachments—our relationships, our affairs, our children, wife, husband, friends and enemies. The deepest layer is our own self, and all these layers are inter-connected.

If we really want to get rid of the ego, we will have to move in a very scientific way, step by step. That is the way of the Buddha. First, let go of objects or of worldly possessions; second, let go of attachments and our relationships; and third, let go even of the self. The sages say: if we let go of the first two, the preliminary layers of ego, the third will happen automatically.

Excerpts from:

From Death to Deathlessness, Ch.30

CHAPTER 4

RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY

'To be or not to be' is not the issue, the question is: how to be? Our desires are rooted in our discontentment, and our organised religions are rooted in our desires. We are never happy with who we are, where we are, and what we have. We go on yearning endlessly to be different from others, to be special, to be more respectable and better looking, to possess more than what we need. We want to be recognised as extraordinary.

The state of discontentment exists on three levels:

- **A state *without* discontentment:** At this level, one is totally unaware of one's discontentment. Except feeling a biological need, there is a complete lack of any passionate urge for a desire to be satisfied. A baby lives in this state. The world of its desires is yet to emerge; it is dormant until the child begins to function through the mind.
- **A state *full of* discontentment:** This is the state where one's ego has begun to exercise its power and control. As the

child begins to grow and becomes an adult, he is besieged with comparison, competition, and the continuous urge to be different and special from others. The individual is in a 'rat race', chasing dreams, building expectations. It is a mind under stress and in acute tension.

Osho tells a parable:

'A man worshipped God for many, many years, and one day God appeared to him. He asked only for one thing. He said, "Give me something—that is why I have been worshipping you—something which can fulfil all my wishes. Whatsoever I ask should be fulfilled, immediately."

'God gave him a seashell, a beautiful seashell, and he said, "You ask anything from this seashell and immediately, instantly, it will be fulfilled."

'He tried—it was so. He was immensely happy. He asked for a big palace and it was there. He asked for beautiful women and they were there, and he asked for good food and it was there. Since that day he lived in absolute luxury.

'But one day everything got disturbed. A *sannyasin*, a wandering monk, stayed with the man. The wandering monk said to him, "I have heard about your secret, but that is nothing. I have also worshipped God, far longer than you, and you are a householder, I am a monk, of course he was more gracious to me. He has also given me a big seashell. Look at this seashell. This is double the size of your seashell."

'It was and the monk said, "Whatsoever you ask, the seashell gives you double. If you ask for one palace it makes two palaces for you. It always gives you double."

'Man's greed is such that the man became greedy. Now one seashell was enough; he could have asked twice or thrice, there was no problem. But a greedy man is blind—greed

is blind. He became infatuated. He told the monk, "You are a monk; you have renounced the world. Give your seashell to me and you can have my small seashell. For your purposes that is enough. I am a householder."

'So the seashells were exchanged. Early in the morning, after taking a bath, the man worshipped and asked the seashell to give him one lakh rupees. The seashell said, "Why one lakh? I can give you two lakhs!" The man was immensely happy. He said, "Good, give me two lakhs." The seashell said, "Why two lakhs? I can give you four lakhs." Now, the man was a little puzzled and disturbed. He said, "Okay, give me four lakhs." The seashell said, "I will give you eight lakhs."

'And so on, so forth it went on—but nothing was given! Promises and promises...and whatsoever he asked, the promise was doubled. He rushed to catch hold of the monk because in the morning, early morning, he was to leave. He had already left...'

- **A state of *non*-discontentment:** Only the one who has seen the utter futility of keeping desires and running after them functions at this level. The individual has learned the meaninglessness of craving for something, knowing full well that all cravings lead to misery. The person at this stage is totally free to be in the moment by transcending desires. It is a state of being here and now in total acceptance.

In a way, institutionalised religion is useful, for it makes one see the futility of hoping that someday prayers will be answered, and somebody will look after one's interests; that some miracle will make things happen. Getting disillusioned with fictitious concepts and ideas propagated by custodians of religion, the mechanical rituals, the empty words and promises, the individual is finally provoked to find one's own way, look for one's own truth, in one's total freedom.

In this sense, organised religion inadvertently throws the individual back to his centre; it pushes one to be oneself truly and authentically. It somehow becomes instrumental in setting the person on a course of searching and seeking. Desire for the trivial, the transitory, and the unsatiating draws one to follow institutionalised religion. However, the very futility of it all encourages one to seek the eternal, the infinite and the transcendental, which lead one on to the path of spirituality.

Religion Versus Following a Spiritual Path

Religion in its most popular sense is seen more as a human need. In its sociocultural implication, it is projected as a model for doing good. Religion is rarely seen and understood as a self-transforming experience and as a guide to be true to oneself. Religion in its organised or institutional form is seen and taught as part of a utilitarian value system rather than as a universal and transcendental force.

The conventional teaching of religion is essentially ethical and moral in nature. It divides life experiences into good and evil, right and wrong, mine and yours, and it leaves one to choose only that which is advocated, labelled, or approved by scriptural and/or pastoral authority. In this sense, the individual is never free to see, think or feel independently or to decide without apprehension or feelings of guilt.

In its traditional role, religion functions as follows:

- **It gives a sense of security:** The individual is part of a crowd that follows a belief system, which is accepted and applied without question. A crowd by its very nature is unconscious, and when the individual identifies with the crowd, he becomes part of the collective unconscious.
- **It gives hope:** We are almost constantly caught up in the vortex of family, social and economic pressure. We naturally

would like to end our frustrations, our sorrows and miseries. We look for support, a way out. We want to see the light at the end of the tunnel. Religion gives assurance and hope that there is a light at the end of the tunnel. Marx calls this assurance, this hope, 'opium'. Hopes and dreams have a utility; they are necessary for making the pressures of human life bearable.

- **It makes it easy to beg:** Desire is the main drive behind our activity. How passionately we go about fulfilling a desire depends upon what we are going to get out of it. Particularly when we seek such fulfilment from a person, it often turns out to be painful. Although, our experience shows, no desire is ever completely met; and hence, desires are endless. To be constantly asking, wanting, demanding, from another hurts the ego. To be a beggar is self-demeaning. But one doesn't face this situation when asking for something, for anything, in a prayer. Although the person is begging, the sting of being a beggar is not there.
- **It makes it easy to shift responsibility:** Often our desires lead to acts that cause hurt, pain, or conflict. In such a situation the priest, becoming the conduit of divine power, offers consolation and forgiveness, gives rationalisations, and helps one to be free from guilt and responsibility. The explanation of karma and the act of confession provide an easier way out of carrying the weight of sin or wrongdoing.

So long as one is caught up in meeting the unending desires of the mind, priests, prayers and the ritualistic paraphernalia will continue to play dominant roles. If, however, we come to see that the desires of our psychological world, because of their very character, can hardly be fulfilled, the utility of institutionalised religion and our dependency on it will come to an end.

Organised religion and spirituality are two different phenomena although they are seen as interchangeable. People generally are drawn to institutional religion because of greed or fear. Desiring is part of the greedy mind—wanting more than what one already has, wanting something not necessarily to satisfy one's need but to feed one's ego. Religion in its popular form tends to convince us that we can get what we want. All we need to do is to believe in the tenets and follow the prescribed rules.

People also carry fear, mainly reinforced by the priests, that not following what one is supposed to will cause disaster for oneself and for one's family. Prayer, instead of being a sincere expression of thankfulness and gratitude, ends up in many respects to be the means for asking for favours—either to fulfil desires, out of greed, or to seek protection from fear.

Spiritual search is driven neither by greed nor by fear; it neither wants anything nor is it afraid of losing anything. In fact, a truly spiritual person need not follow any commandment, doctrine, belief system, scriptural authority, or ritual given by a religion to serve any particular purpose. The search is totally independent and totally into the unknown. The seeker needs no mediator; he relies on his own efforts and sense of direction. Since the person's needs are simple and basic, whatever one has is enough.

These two spheres of human endeavour are poles apart. Religion in its organised form is a collective phenomenon. There is a common bond between those who follow a religion. Adherence to religious precepts as a family and as a society is seen as virtuous. The church, the temple, the mosque, or the synagogue is the meeting point for adherents, a symbol of solidarity, a well-orchestrated system neatly integrated into one's family life.

Spirituality is, as the contemporary mystic Osho says, 'A flight of the alone to the alone.' It is a solitary search for the truth.

There is no ready-made path to follow; the person has to create one. No two people's paths can be similar because as individuals we are unique, our search is unique; hence our methods will also be unique. The seeker in one's solitary journey, though, relates with all, but is never part of a group, a crowd, or a congregation.

'Religion' lives on the idea of God, scriptural authority, or priestly interpretation of the 'word of God'. The explanation of the Creator and Creation, of the all-powerful controlling figure is at the core of religion. Institutionalised religion is God/centred.

Spirituality has no presupposed idea about anything. The search reveals the truth, whatever that may be. The seeker is the self-appointed determiner of what is right and which way to go. Meditation, awareness, earnest effort and a trusting heart make up the spiritual discipline—*sadhana*. The fire of one's intense and honest search burns all that is non-essential, thus purifying the body, thoughts and emotions. In other words, spirituality is individual centered—the seeker is the rock, the sculptor and the image carved, all in one.

Religion encourages altruism, serving the poor and a social ethic. In fact, in many cases the role of religion is viewed in terms of taking care of the society. It is generally accepted that one who is devoted to serving people is in effect serving God and hence is truly a religious person. This service in many instances, however, is motivated by reward—whether this worldly or other-worldly.

Spirituality is concerned basically more with 'being' than 'doing'. The seeker's whole effort is to be oneself, truly and authentically. The focus of one's spiritual work is first to come face to face with his conscious, subconscious, and unconscious levels of existence. The other is not the concern. The foremost application of love, compassion, help and understanding is initially to oneself. In this respect, charity truly begins at home. Only when one has earned the state of love and compassion, only when one

is physically, emotionally and spiritually healthy, can he share one's health, happiness, love and compassion with others. In fact, such a person will not go out and do any particular act of serving; instead, wherever the person will be, his very presence will heal people, bring harmony, and make the whole environment alive and vibrating.

Religion is future-oriented. There is a specific interest in taking care of the hereafter. What will one gain in the future, whether in this life or after death, is the predominant idea underlying one's religious beliefs and activities.

Spirituality is rooted in the here and now. The seeker learns how to live in a given moment with awareness, with joy and celebration, with love and compassion. Living this moment fully and totally is enough. The future is seen as rooted in the present moment; hence for a seeker, taking care of this moment is all that is needed; it will automatically take care of the next.

Being

Our individual and collective desires and we as individuals are not two separate things. We are a composite of our longings, expectations and ambitions. We are told, taught and trained to *become*, and what we become is a by-product of what we desire or what we are made to desire.

The main task ahead for every human being is how to be in the midst of desires that pull and push us in all directions. We contain not just one psyche but multiple psyches, not just one mind but multiple minds. Hence the challenge is to find the very principle, the quality, and the overriding force that sustains life and helps in the evolution of consciousness. The search leads one to see that even among the multiplicity of desires, something remains closest to one's feeling happy. Just as following the law of gravity is essential to function soundly as a body, the law of being is critical

to function as consciousness. To be rooted in one's true nature, to be authentic in relating to the world around, to be closer to one's own centre, is truly being religious.

To be truthful to oneself, to relate with and live with oneself, is to be religious. How to behave with the other, relate with the other is part of ethics and morality, it is part of *becoming*. One who has learned how to live with oneself can find it easier to live with and relate to others as well. Thus, he will *be* a moral person without necessarily attempting to *become* moral or ethical, without necessarily following codes and commandments.

Should religion, too, encourage *becoming*, it would be merely an extension of our desire, which can lead to discontentment. Moreover, a religion based on desire and discontentment can easily breed blind faith and can turn the adherent into a fanatic.

Buddha saw that as long as the mind created and perverted the world of sense perception, authentic being would be hard to follow. Hence, he reminded us to see directly, without creating or projecting something of our own from what we perceive. Only one who is rooted in one's authentic being can stop forever walking into one's own falsehood created in ignorance.

Freedom

Religious consciousness can grow only if one is free to grow. But we are already identified and bound to what we have—our possessions. In effect, we become possessed by our possessions. This ownership is not merely limited to worldly objects; in fact, it extends to owning people (husband, wife, a friend) and even to owning ideas, ideologies and philosophies. The most interesting part is that all of these are subject to change, modification and even disappearance. They are all part of a dynamic flow of life and yet we continue to want to exercise our ownership, disregarding the

fact that what we think we own now may not be the same that we initially identified ourselves with. This inability to see the change and adjust correspondingly to the given reality is a clear sign of how imprisoned we are by our mental identification. The law of freedom means being free of enslavement by our psychological conditioning of the past.

We are guided, motivated and controlled by our lifelong habits, likes and dislikes, set ways and patterns. But much more than that, we are controlled by the conditioned way of seeing and being and are dictated by what we know from past experiences, perceptions, knowledge and teachings. The given moment, the present, is seen through the projection of the past; thus it limits our ability, our freedom, to respond to that which is here and now.

Buddha realised that as long as the observer perverted the observed, it was impossible to be authentically free. Hence the enlightened masters—from Buddha down to the contemporary mystic Osho—have always reminded us to learn how to see directly. Their insights teach us how not to impose ideas and answers, projections and perceptions of the past on to the reality of the present moment.

Ethics is guided by the norms, conditionings and ideals established in the past. Its focus is on how one should behave in accordance with the laws laid out in the past. A religious consciousness, on the other hand, *sees* what is and responds to the moment, in the moment.

Ecstasy

We seek happiness, but more often than not, we end up in pain and frustration. We then try to run away from the pain but in doing so are left feeling helpless, losing self-esteem and self-confidence. Both happiness and pain, are condition-dependent.

Normally, we are familiar with pain and sorrow, happiness and unhappiness. Only very few have seen the third possibility and have experienced that which is beyond this duality—the experience of joy, bliss, ecstasy, *ananda*. *Ananda* is not condition-dependent; *ananda* is self-evident and self-perpetuating.

Experiences of happiness and unhappiness are dependent upon fulfilment of certain conditions, and as these conditions keep changing so does the experience of happiness and unhappiness. In fact, often both keep interchanging their respective places. This ever-changing and fluctuating phenomenon causes a tense feeling of uncertainty, which, seems to loom overhead like a sword hanging by a thin hair.

The moment one is able to see the absurdity of this situation and the stress and agony caused by it, one begins to seek *ananda*. One begins to gravitate towards one's inner self—away from ego-mind, away from the ego-centre.

As one moves into the space within, say the enlightened beings, one finds the source of joy and ecstasy, true happiness, always available without needing to fulfil any condition, or depending upon anyone to give it.

We human beings are not actually designed to be miserable, unhappy, or violent. These are our choices, conscious or unconscious, but our choices nonetheless. Essentially, we are, what is called 'hard-wired for joy and bliss', that is, for experiencing *ananda*. Experts say, had we been 'hard-wired' for misery, we would have been extinct millions of years ago. Our evolution, particularly our spiritual evolution, has largely been made possible due to our ability to seek and find unconditional, independent, eternal joy. It all depends, however, on our making the right choices—with honesty and awareness.

There is a point within us, an eternal source of joy and ecstasy, which exists unconditionally but remains untapped

and undiscovered. Consciousness can be seen as a clear pool of water in which all our experiences of pain and happiness, our interactions and our relationships, our karmas and conditionings are reflected. When consciousness is disturbed, when it is in turmoil, all that is reflected in it begins to shake and rattle. However, when the consciousness is calm, undisturbed, silent, everything and anything reflected in it also becomes calm and silent.

All that is reflected in consciousness is essentially the mind. Hence, when consciousness is disturbed or in turmoil, the mind is in full manifestation and consciousness is invisible. When consciousness is calm and silent, however, the mind is invisible; it ceases to manifest its presence.

This cessation of mind, this transcendence of mind brings one to experience ecstasy. It is a discovery of unimaginable proportions—beyond description. It is literally what the word ecstasy means etymologically—off-centered. The person's centre shifts from mind to consciousness. This is a real paradigm shift.

It is in the nature of things that first we become infatuated with something or some person, but soon we get turned off by the same thing and the same person. This experience is frustrating and also causes tension. Moreover, many people have a weak memory and hence, regardless of how frustrating and disappointing the experience may have been, one gets into the same situation again. We repeat ourselves and we also repent what we have done. Repentance, in a way, creates room to repeat the same mistake. We move from one extreme to another.

The moment one settles down in one's consciousness, the moment one moves away from a mental state, a state of unconsciousness, one stops functioning in extremes. One stops moving in circles. The individual becomes free of tension, frustration, excitement and inner conflict. The person becomes silent, relaxed, centered. In such silence, relaxation and centering, there is ecstasy.

Wisdom

The states of happiness, joy and creativity are possible when we have seen and understood our own paradigms, and also when we have learned how to make a paradigm shift. The paradigm shift actually lies in our willingness to go within and take a close look at our own paradigm, to examine the inner climate, the inner health, the inner ecology—ecology of the mind.

In fact, the outer world, the world of our interaction with other beings, and our attitude towards the outer ecology, is a reflection of our inner world. What we do and what we are show who we are. Our deeds reflect our inner being. We create our individual and our collective world.

C.G. Jung has called our inner world the unconscious, a place of 'psychic anarchy'. So the shift in our paradigm would require us to know how we move from 'psychic anarchy' to psychic harmony. We need a different approach to life and living so that inner coherency may bring about outer coherency. We need to find a strategic and systematic application, a method which Jung calls 'psychic hygiene'.[1] We may also heed the insight given by Einstein where he says that the problems we are facing cannot be solved at the same level of consciousness where they were created. In 1990, speaking at Stanford University, Mikhail Gorbachev made a remarkable statement which echoes what Einstein has said:

'Everything must change. Tolerance is the alpha and omega of a new world order. We are approaching a time when the very principle of alliance building should become different. It should mean unity to create conditions for a life worthy of human being—protect the environment, combat hunger, disease, drug addiction and ignorance. The cold war is now behind us. And let us not wrangle over who won it.'

Jones Salk puts things in the right perspective when he says today the challenge is not that of survival of the fittest, rather,

it is that of 'survival of the wisest'. We will now have to live and function with wisdom, which is more than and beyond knowledge and information. We are ready for any information, but rarely do we strive for our personal transformation. For transformation, wisdom is the way. Although, as William Blake puts it rather sarcastically in one of his poems:

Wisdom is sold
in the desolate market where
none come to buy...[2]

Over several millennia, mankind has come a long way through different revolutions including the agricultural, the industrial, and environmental and information revolutions. But now, as the world has turned into a global village and at the same time the threat of global suicide is also more so acute than ever before, a spiritual revolution is urgently needed—a revolution to gain wisdom because as Freud says, 'Human character is now earth's destiny.'

While science looks at and examines the changeable, or the moveable world around us, spirituality looks at and examines the unchangeable, the immovable within us. Although spirituality accepts the existing reality—the changing and the moving—however, within this chaotic and dynamic world, it brings a certain order. Spirituality brings one to the point from where one can be part of the changing world, but without losing the unchanging, unmoving centre. Change is inevitable; but remaining centered is our destiny.

Spiritual revolution is a transformation of the inner world. It basically is a matter of how we can change our inner ecology. The effective method to bring about this change, the method for attaining 'psychic hygiene', is meditation. We shall look more into this aspect under Preparation later in the book, but to make a point here briefly, meditation is a methodology for becoming aware of

our inner world and changing it. Its fundamental approach is how to become conscious of our unconscious.

Meditation means rearranging the mind—from chaos to order, from 'psychic anârchy' to psychic harmony. Meditation helps release mental toxins. It is, in essence, a process of detoxification of mind, cleansing of the inner environment; it is like taking an inner bath. Ethics and morality provide commandments: what to do and what not to do. Meditation gives awareness: how to be, and how not to be. When the 'doing' comes from the 'being', when it emerges out of our awareness, it intrinsically carries qualities of goodness. It automatically brings clarity in terms of what to do and what not to do. The contemporary enlightened mystic Osho explains meditation:

'Meditation brings two things, it brings wisdom, it brings freedom. These two flowers grow out of meditation. When you become silent, utterly silent, beyond the mind, two flowers bloom in you, one is of wisdom: you know what is, and what is not. And the other is of freedom: you know now there are no more limitations on you, either of time or space. You become liberated. Meditation is the key to liberation, to freedom, to wisdom.'

Excerpts from:

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol.4, Ch.3
Dhammapada, Vol.8, Ch.1

End notes:

1. *Jung*, C.G., *The Psychology of Kundalini Yoga:* p.xxviii, Princeton University Press, 1999
2. Stevenson, W.H. (ed.), *The Poems of William Blake*, p.239, Harlow, Longman, 1971

PART II

PROCESS

CHAPTER 5

THE INNER ALCHEMY

Change is essentially an alchemic process. We come across this in legends—there were alchemic processes where metals were transformed into gold, and there were chemical processes where elixir was created for a longer life. Many Taoist mystics have been known for their alchemic expertise.

In their quest, those who have worked on the spiritual path went through alchemic changes in their inner world. They went through a process of transforming their psychological barriers and were able to transcend the mind. This personal transformation includes a three-fold recognition:

- **Recognition of 'I am the problem':** Instead of finding an excuse, looking for a justification, giving a rational explanation, or putting the blame on another, the person accepts with courage that the problem one is facing has roots within himself. One accepts the fact that he is angry, greedy, or jealous and so on.

- **Recognition of the reality of life:** One may have an ideal view of people and situations, and one may have expectations based on this ideal view; however, life in itself does not necessarily conform to that ideal. There is a recognition that, regardless of one's ideal view, the reality of life functions at a totally different level. This makes one see that there is always a gap between the level at which life exists or moves, what Osho calls 'the is-ness', and the level of expectation at which one wants life to exist or move.
- **Recognition of, 'I am consciousness':** It is important for a person to recognise the consciousness and not the mind, because one can see the mind and as the mystics say, the seer cannot be the seen. Recognition that the body is not the mind, because mind sees the body. Mind is not consciousness, because consciousness sees the mind.

What is the nature of transformation? We may look at it this way: we see an ice cube, the same ice cube when melted turns into water, and the same water when heated turns into vapour. The human body is the physical manifestation of energy; it is matter, or let us say an ice cube. A psychological manifestation of the same energy is the mind, or water. The spiritual manifestation of that energy is consciousness or, in our example, the vapour. The body and the mind have qualities, and attributes; but the consciousness has none. It exists only as energy; it is only *is-ness*.

One can be clear about the existence of body; it is there, visible. It is matter, made of the five-fold manifestation of energy—the *panch mahabhuta*: earth, space, water, air and fire. One can also be clear about consciousness, that it is *not* matter; it has no identifiable signs; it is not visible and not tangible. In between is the mind, which is neither tangible nor visible as the body is, nor is it totally unidentifiable and intangible as is the consciousness. Mind means relating, mind creates the world of relationship—relationships with people, objects, thoughts

and emotions. Anything that the mind comes in contact with, it adds to the individual's world of relationships.

Matter is always there; it exists as a form of energy. Whatever form it may take, it exists as matter. Consciousness is also always there; it also exists, but has no form or attribute. Its presence is eternal, say the enlightened beings; it is never subject to change. By its very nature, though, the mind keeps changing. It is never there, in the moment. With the changing mind, our world of relationship changes, often causing pain and unhappiness. So, mind is the misery; and yet, this mind *can* be managed.

When one goes through the alchemic process in the spiritual sense, the mind comes to a point of steadiness, a point of silence—it gets centered. It transforms and allows one to enter into the state of consciousness.

Is such a transformation necessary? If yes, then why? What is at stake? Enlightened mystics say, it is not a question whether transformation is necessary or not; in fact, spiritual transformation is human destiny. Sooner or later, moving from the level of matter, the individual being will need to evolve and complete his journey towards the vertical plane and attain spiritual consciousness. This evolutionary process is part of human destiny because three things are at stake: life, creativity and happiness.

Only an evolved consciousness can sustain life, make creativity a truly religious experience, and bring individuals to an everlasting state of happiness universally.

Out of their compassion for mankind, the enlightened mystics have shared the secrets of inner alchemy, the process of inner change. We can call them processes or paths of transformation. Many such paths have been discovered over centuries; many processes have been explored, giving us the necessary means to pursue our spiritual journey. We shall take a look at three such processes that have proven to be a blessing to humanity—yoga, love and awareness.

CHAPTER 6

YOGA

Yoga is a way of living—living in union, in a unified way, in unison. Yoga is harnessing our energies and making them harmonious for our day-to-day living. Whoever lives this way is a yogi.

The word 'yoga' comes from the Sanskrit root *yuja* meaning to link or to unite. The English word 'yoke' comes from the same root. Thus, 'that which unites or links together is yoga.' According to Vedanta, yoga means supreme realisation and Sage Yagyavalkya feels that yoga is the reunion of the living self with the supreme self.

Yoga is basically a science. It contains no speculation, no projection, only self-exploration and direct experience. It is a science for it can bring result to anyone who practises it. It is a technique and a process of self-transformation. One may say that any path or process is in a sense a form of yoga. Yoga is the means and the object of self-transformation; hence, the sages in India say, 'It is through yoga that yoga can be known; it is through yoga that

an inclination towards yoga develops. One who becomes free from passion through yoga, delights endlessly in yoga.'

Sage Patanjali founded the science of yoga in 500-300 BCE. He created a step by step guide, perhaps the first how-to book ever. It is a methodical work, explained systematically for the purpose of realising one's true self, one's highest consciousness.

Patanjali's work is known as the *Yoga* Sutras—aphorisms on yoga. It is recognised as the oldest textbook on the system of yoga. It consists of 195 sutras or aphorisms. A sutra means a thread, a starting point. It is a very crystallised statement, very much like a telegraphic message.

Let us look at a few deeply insightful statements or sutras by Patanjali. In the initial four statements he makes his vision clear and goes to the root of the human condition. He begins with a very significant statement, 'Now, an exposition of the discipline of yoga.' The word 'now' is significant. What Patanjali is saying is: now, since you are ready to enter into the discipline of yoga; now, that you have made a commitment, I shall explain to you what yoga means. It seems apparent that without such readiness and commitment a scientifically laid out path requiring strict discipline will be impossible to follow.

In the next sutra, Patanjali defines yoga as a means of mastering the fluctuations, the modifications of *chitta* or consciousness. By following Patanjali's vision of yoga, we can visualise the human mind as a lake, a body of water, which is essentially calm, steady and clear. However, our thoughts in Patanjali's discourse are 'modifications or fluctuations of the mind', get stirred up, or agitated and become active. He identifies these modifications, this stirring as *vrittis* meaning: waves appearing in the lake.

According to Patanjali, these waves may arise from our memory bank or may appear because of our sense perceptions

interacting with the outer world. When the waves are quiet, the lake (our mind) is quiet; the water is clear and one can see through the clear water the consciousness within.

In Patanjali's work, the word *chitta* or consciousness implies several things. It means the mind, 'mind stuff', thinking or rationality. Hence, the primary meaning is attention, observing, imagining, thought process. The secondary meaning conveys heart, emotion. Thus *chitta* for Patanjali is all-inclusive and it implies the whole complex phenomenon of consciousness. Also, yoga views *chitta* as the most refined form of energy. Hence, yoga basically means working with the highest form of energy.

The word, *vritti*, is equally significant. The Sanskrit word *vritta* means a circle. So *vritti* would mean a repetitive, mechanical, habitual mode or movement of thinking. It shows our mind moves in circles, it moves in a groove. Therefore, in Patanjali's work 'mastering' the repetitive fluctuations and movements of mind means stopping the circling movements of thoughts, calming them down, silencing them, through practice of yoga; putting an end to the repetitive thinking so that one may experience consciousness in that state of silence.

So, yoga is a discipline towards achieving voluntary control; an ability to regulate the thought process. Once this is achieved, the consciousness that is hidden underneath the activity of thinking becomes clearly evident. It is then no longer obscured or overshadowed by the fluctuating mental activity. According to yoga, until this happens, that very consciousness mistakenly remains identified with thoughts or emotions and consequently one assumes by default that he *is* that thought or that emotion.

This understanding given by Patanjali is central to his vision of yoga. Patanjali explains there is something behind the thought, the emotion, or even the act, which watches it from a

distance—'dis-identified'. Since we are unaware of this watcher, this witnessing consciousness because of the faulty identification, one believes that he *is* the very thought or the emotion.

This is very different from the Western philosophical assertion, 'I think therefore I am,' as made by Descartes. Patanjali's view is that since we can see, observe thoughts or feelings from a distance, hence the seer is not the seen, the observer is not the observed, the feeler is not that which felt, the thinker is not the thought. A 'dis-identified' witness is a voluntary act made possible through practice and increasing awareness. The witness is situated between the act and the actor, the thought and the thinker, the feeling and the feeler. The *Yoga Sutra* describes it as: *tada drashtuh swarupe avasthanam*. Then the seer is rooted in his true nature, or in its pure consciousness. This is the non-judgmental awareness. It shows suspending one's opinion, for or against anything that is perceived or experienced.

For such a witnessing consciousness to arise, however, one needs to slow down enough to see with watchful awareness; for example, while opening a door, picking up a glass of water, eating, walking, washing dishes and so on. Any activity when done non-mechanically gains a certain quality, a certain grace and beauty. Patanjali says: when one is established in that witnessing consciousness, in that state of awareness, the conditioned reflexes, and the patterned behaviour will begin to disappear and one will be left with the feeling of freedom. Then one would feel a spacious, a transcendental presence surrounding each act.

CHAPTER 7

LOVE

From a very young age, we are potentially endowed with the quality to love and emotional energy. However, as we grow older the seed of love never gets to sprout. Many weeds grow around it, preventing the very seed to sprout and blossom. What are these weeds that prevent love to manifest?

- **The ego:** Insisting on one's own desire, importance and sense of superiority.
- **Fear:** Fearing that the other may not or will not respond favourably to one's desire, importance and sense of superiority; hence, a constant apprehensive attention on the other.
- **Craving:** Fixated to want everything as an object, including love.

The ego leads to covert or overt violence. Fear leads to possessiveness. Craving leads to blind attachment. In either case one is totally unfamiliar with love and is deprived of its benediction.

Basically, there are four manifestations of love-energy: at the level of body, at the level of mind, at the level of soul and at the

level of consciousness. When two bodies meet, the energy is sexual. When two minds meet, the energy is that of attachment. When two souls meet, the energy is that of warmth and affection. When the individual consciousness meets the universal consciousness, it is love blossomed to its fullest potential.

Love-energy at the level of body manifests in three ways:

- **Desire:** It is the beginning point for the energy to move.
- **Longing:** Once a desire is met, wanting more of the same.
- **Attachment:** A continued craving; it may lead to addiction. One is so totally enamoured by the object of desire, sexual or any other, that the only drive is to have it.

Love-energy at the level of mind manifests in attachment between one individual and another. It may not need body as the medium to manifest itself. But desire and longing are equally present at this level.

Love-energy at the level of soul in its sublime form appears as a prayer addressed to that which is beyond comprehension by human mind—the Divine Being. There is deep affection and longing to connect with the Divine, but more with a thankful heart rather than through an asking mind.

Love-energy at the level of consciousness manifests itself through total and universal awareness. The body, the mind, desire and longing are all irrelevant at this level. What exists is simply a state of consciousness relating with all, without choice and without discrimination.

Those who have realised true love say it is not a relationship; it is the sublime state of consciousness. All relationships are rooted in the ego. An ego-mind is the biggest barrier in reaching this exalted state of consciousness. Kabir says: the path of love is so narrow that two cannot walk on it together. Here, two means the ego-mind and the loving consciousness.

The enlightened beings also point out that there are two kinds of worlds: the world where everything has a price—a world where love has an exchange value; where it can be bartered. The other kind of world is where love has no price tag and reward, recognition, money and status are either irrelevant or meaningless. Love has its own intrinsic value; it carries the ultimate value when manifested through an enlightened consciousness. Such consciousness is evident when Jesus says: God is love. One can see this as meaning God is nothing but love, or God has a loving nature.

However, Osho gives a new insight when he says: love is God. By saying so, Osho has elevated the very meaning of love to an exalted state. He implies love is nothing but godliness; to be loving means to be godly, to be Divine. This raises the status of a human being. It reflects divinity, where he can manifest the quality of love beyond ego and vanity, beyond discrimination and duality.

Osho narrates a story:

'One day Radha asked Krishna, "My lord, this flute is always on your lips. I am very jealous of it. This flute of bamboo gets so much of the nectar-like touch of your sweet lips that I am dying of jealousy. Why is it so close to you? Why is it so dear to you? Every time I think, I wish I could be the flute of Krishna. And in future lives, I want to be the flute which rests on your lips."

'On hearing this Krishna laughed loudly and said, "Dear, it is very difficult to be a flute. Perhaps there is nothing more difficult than that. Only he who can completely annihilate himself, can become the flute. This flute is not merely a piece of bamboo; in fact, it is the heart of a lover. It has no tune of its own. It has made the tunes of the lover its own music. I sing, it sings. If I am silent, it is silent, and, for this reason, my life itself has become its own life."

'The mystery of being the flute is itself the mystery of finding the music. The key to find the self is in ending the ego.'

When love is realised from such an elevated state, then:

- Love is *not* ownership or possessiveness; love is a total let go.
- Love is *not* demanding; love is giving, sharing unconditionally.
- Love is *not* in the past or in the future; love is in the moment—here and now.
- Love is *not* a relationship; love is simply relating.
- Love is *not* exclusive in nature; love is all-inclusive.
- Love is *not* articulate; love is in silence, it is beyond words.
- Love is *not* impatient; love is awaiting; love is in longing.
- Love is *not* dependent on anyone; love is enough unto itself even in one's aloneness.
- Love is *not* a static phenomenon; love is dynamic, it is a flowing energy.
- Love is *not* expectation; love is gratefulness for whatever is.

In essence, love is the door through which we enter in the world; we carry its seed within us as we take birth. But the issue is that, we are living in a cerebral age. Our intellectual achievements were never as high as they are today. At the same time, the spirit of love, compassion and healing have never been as low in our society as they are now. In the process of achieving intellectual, technological and material gains, in the process of our reaching to the heights of civilisation, mankind has drifted away from heart. Instead of working through emotional and spiritual centres, the mankind today is centred more on the ego-mind.

It is said, once a man came to Acharya Ramanuj (eleventh/twelfth CE) and said, 'I am looking for God; I want to love God as you do. Please show me how I can love God.'

Ramanuj said, 'Have you loved anyone before?'

The man said, 'I have been busy searching for God, so I stayed away from loving.' Ramanuj said, 'Think a little; see if you

can recall having loved a friend, a woman, a child, an animal, a bird...anyone...have you loved anyone even a little?'

The man said, 'I have been controlling myself from falling in love...I just want to love God, please show me how I can love God...and why are you asking these questions?'

Ramanuj asked him the third time, 'Look into your past. Have you ever had even a glimpse of love, a taste of love?'

The man said, 'I have come here to find the way to love God and you are asking me such strange questions. Please give me a straight answer.'

Ramanuj said, 'Then it is difficult. Because if you had known how to love, that means how to drop your ego, how to dissolve in someone's love...whoever, a man, a woman, a child. If you had such an experience of love, I would have shown you the path to love God, because then you would have understood what I am talking about.'

Dag Hammerskjold, past secretary of the UN, has made a very remarkable statement. He said, 'It is more noble to give yourself completely to one individual than to labour diligently for the salvation of masses.'[1] One may devote hours helping hundreds of people 'out there' and still may not have a deep, meaningful, loving relationship with a friend, a son, a daughter, or one's spouse.

It would take more courage, nobility, sincerity and honesty to build this loving relationship with one, this totality of feeling for one. It is this totality of feeling for one which is conveyed by Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gita*. He says: 'Those whose thoughts are fixed on Me, I quickly lift them up from *samsara*, the ocean of death...' (12.7). Krishna is saying, those who love him totally he saves them from the ocean of death—*samsara*.

These two experiences are intimately connected with each other—love and death. For those who don't know what love is, this *samsara*, this world of death and rebirth, is the only reality.

But for those who have experienced love, this *samsara* of death and rebirth becomes irrelevant. In fact, for them death, per se, becomes irrelevant.

That is why we have stories where lovers are willing to die for the sake of love. Love stories of Laila and Majnu, Romeo and Juliet support this phenomenon. They did not fear death because for them love was such a fulfilling experience that even death could not take away that fulfilment, that completeness, that totality of experience.

If our human interpersonal love can give such fulfilment, one can imagine how much more fulfilling and ecstatic love for the Divine can be. So Krishna says, 'Place thy mind on Me alone [totality], make thy intellect find place in Me...' (12.8). The implication of this statement is that when we talk of the Divine, we first apply our intellect, we argue, we ask for proof, we make the Divine subject of our debate. What is needed first is to apply and focus one's mind, one's feeling, or one's emotions on the Divine. Once that happens, the intellect would be easy to focus on the Divine.

When we apply the intellect first, it is an egotistic approach. One thinks he can demystify the infinite mystery of existence. But this would mean using tunnel vision. On the other hand, when one brings feelings first, when love precedes the intellect, one is being humble. In such a case, one recognises the vastness, and the greatness of the Divine.

Jung points out that there is an intrinsic need, an inner drive within humans towards reaching out and aligning with the Divine. Deep within us there exists an urge for becoming one with the Whole; an urge for reintegration. This is a deeply spiritual urge; and spiritual traditions have seen it as an integral part of their vision.

This inner longing, to reconnect with the Universal, the Absolute, God, Tao, Brahman, Allah—in whatever way the

phenomenon is perceived—the saints and mystics have identified as prayer. It is an exalted state of love, a state of prayerfulness. It is explained as a 'call', a deep desire to meet that which is beyond the confines of time and space. It is a state of total annihilation of ego; the Sufis identify it as the state of *fana*.

Thirteenth century poet and mystic Mevlāna Jalaluddin Rumi expresses this phenomenon of ego's annihilation and meeting with the Divine:

Listen, O Drop, give yourself up without regret,
and in exchange, gain the Ocean.
Listen, O Drop, bestow upon yourself this honour
And in the arms of the Sea be secure.
Who, indeed, should be so fortunate,
an Ocean wooing a drop![2]

It is a popular belief that prayer is to be done in a temple, a mosque, or a church. People visit holy places to offer their prayers. But if one has attained the state of prayerfulness, the inner purity of love, then wherever one may be, he is in prayer; and that very place is the temple, the mosque, the church. The basic thing is that of being prayerful. The real challenge is that of being humble, free of ego and vanity; a willingness to drop all the heavy baggage that carries one's false identity.

It is generally believed that God precedes prayer; that, there is God, hence prayer. But the reality is different. Prayer precedes that ultimate One. In order to see and experience the Divine within and without, one first needs to be prayerful. Prayer is the eye to see It. Prayer is the means to know It. Prayer, overflowing with love, enables one to integrate with the ultimate; it enables one to witness luminous splendour of the Divine.

So, the enlightened beings remind us, the true power of prayer lies in the fact that wherever there is prayer, whenever one

is prayerful, one is in the presence of the Divine, the Universal, the Ultimate. The question is, is one ready, is one prepared to see and to receive! Rabindranath Tagore brings this point through his prose:

'The night darkened. Our day's works had been done. We thought that the last guest had arrived for the night and the doors in the village were all shut. Only some said, the King was to come. We laughed and said, "No, it cannot be!"

'It seemed there were knocks at the door and we said it was nothing but the wind. We put out the lamps and lay down to sleep. Only some said, "It is the messenger!" We laughed and said, "No, it must be the wind!"

'There came a sound in the dead of the night. We sleepily thought it was the distant thunder. The earth shook, the walls rocked, and it troubled us in our sleep. Only some said, it was the sound of the wheels. We said in a drowsy murmur, "No, it must be the rumbling of sounds!"

'The night was still dark when the drum sounded. The voice came, "Wake up! Delay not!" We pressed our hands on our hearts and shuddered with fear. Some said, "Lo, there is the King's flag!" We stood up on our feet and cried, "There is no time for delay!"

'The King had come—but where are lights, where are wreaths? Where is the throne to seat him? Oh, shame! Oh, utter shame! Where is the hall, the decorations? Some one has said, "Vain is this cry! Greet him with empty hands; lead him into thy rooms all bare!..."

'I thought I should ask of thee—but I dared not—the rose wreath thou had on thy neck. Thus I waited for the morning, when thou did depart, to find a few fragments on the bed. And like a beggar I searched in the dawn only for a stray petal or two...'[3]

Prayer, essentially, is an experience; it gives a new dimension to life. It is a new way of looking at things. It is a new approach, a new way of functioning in the world. The sages say: prayer is not something you do; prayer is something you become. Prayer is a state of being. It has nothing much to do with the words we utter in a temple, in a mosque or a church. It is a silent dialogue with the Existence. Father Thomas Keating is quoted as saying, 'Silence is the language God speaks, and everything else is a bad translation.'[4]

Falling in tune with the Whole, being in harmony with Existence is prayer and this experience, say the sages, is so deep that one cannot express it or articulate it in words. For some people prayer is silence; and for others prayer is a dialogue. Indeed, prayer can be seen as both: a dialogue in silence.

Though silent, a prayer is a communication in a sense, because, as the Sufi mystics say, for a prayerful heart the whole existence becomes the beloved; and yet, communication with the beloved is not through words. It is through feeling; it is an energetic communion with the Divine—the Beloved.

Prayer is a feeling of immense gratitude, a deep thankfulness. Prayer is essentially thankfulness for this gift we call Life. Just to breathe fresh air is so nourishing. Just seeing the sunrise, the greenery, beautiful flowers, is such a joy. Just listening to the birds singing, and hearing the sound of running water is so pleasing to ears. Have we earned all this? Did we work for all this? The fact is, all of this and much more has been given to us as a gift, but have we ever thanked with a loving heart for receiving this gift?

Whether God is or is not, is that really relevant? Those who have attained ultimate realisation say: if one feels thankful with a loving heart, God is not far away, because as Osho declares, 'God is not a person, God is a presence.' And prayer, a communion of a thankful heart, sees this presence alive in its ultimate glory.

Sages of the Upanishads never say: 'God exists.' Rather, they declare, 'That which exists is God.' God is this presence all around—here and now, since eternity. For those who have known and lived prayer, God is not one of the things or entities such as other things or entities are. In their experience, whatever is, whatever exists is God. Hence they find it a tautological statement, an unnecessary repetition to say: God is, because God means that which is and that which is, the very Is-ness is nothing but God. Prayer is a means of becoming one with this Is-ness, with this divineness, this godliness.

Furthermore, the power of prayer lies in the way we live; prayer is a way of living. Prayer is not a ritual, or a mechanical everyday routine. Prayer is remembering the Divine presence every moment; what Kabir calls *surati*. Sufis call this remembrance—*zikra* or *dhikra*. Guru Nanak calls it *simran* and in the Bhakti tradition it is known as *nama smaran*.

The remembering is not as much of the name of a personified God but rather reminding oneself the all-pervading presence of the Divine energy manifested in myriad forms.

Prayer is a way of living in the sense that, a prayerful person is in prayer twenty-four hours. Such as the saints and mystics have shown, a person in prayer sleeps in a prayerful state; he relaxes into sleep as if one is relaxing into the lap of the Divine.

When the person wakes up, he wakes up in God; as one opens one's eyes the first thing that comes to heart is the feeling of gratitude towards existence—utter gratefulness. Throughout the day there is a continuous undercurrent, a melody playing in the background. Whatever the act may be, the person filled with love continues to be in a prayerful state.

One who is in prayer works in the marketplace, lives with the family, relates with the community, but deep down, at the core of

one's being one stays in touch with the Divine. One remains filled with overflowing love and immense gratitude. Osho says:

'Prayer makes one drunk with God. Only such drunkards know what that state is. And even those who know it cannot put it into words. Let it become an experience. Let us not only discuss it—let us go into it. This very moment! If you feel grateful, a great silence will surround you, a great benediction will start surrounding you. This very moment! Right now! You can be thankful for all that the Whole, the Universe has done for you.'

And the moment thankfulness arises in you—it can arise this very moment—there is prayer. Then nothing stirs in you, all is still. But suddenly one feels like bowing down to some unknown force. That bowing down is prayer.

Excerpts from:

The Earthen Lamps, # 43
The Perfect Master, Vol.I, pp.54-55

End notes:

1. Covey, Stephen R., *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, p.20, Simon & Schuster, 1989.
2. *Dialogue With Eastern Religions*, http:/www.mkzc.org/dialog1.html, accessed on 10/13/2004, italics added.
3. *Gitanjali: A Collection of Prose.* Translations made by the author from the original Bengali, International Pocket Library, Boston, Fourth printing.
4. "Talking to God," *Newsweek*, 6 January 1992.

CHAPTER 8

AWARENESS

Awareness brings one closer to seeing how the mind—a composite of our habits, thoughts, patterns and conditioning functions. Thus looking at this mind it becomes apparent that one is in a state of imbalance. On the one hand, there is a state of misery, pain, sorrow and frustration—a state of disease; an unsteady state of mind. On the other, there is the ever-changing world, always in a flux. One of the two needs to settle down or else the two will go on colliding with each other, naturally causing an unending human suffering.

The universe, the world around us, will not come to a stop; if it did, then life itself would come to an end. Every change, every movement in the universe is an indicator of life. Change and movement are intrinsically connected with the life force. We comprehend the ever-changing world of objects, ideas and human relations with the help of mind. However, we also try to comprehend or realise that which is beyond this transitory world—one may call it God, Spirit, Truth through the same mind and that is where the difficulty is.

Awareness does not deliver the truth; it simply creates an environment, a possibility, a space to suspend the mind so that we may get nearer to truth. It is an experience that can be seen as the greatest human adventure. Awareness at the physical, rational, emotional and spiritual levels is not something one can take for granted; rather, it is a constant process one needs to work through with courage and commitment for being truly religious.

The Sufis say nothing worthwhile can be taught to one who has no awareness. The first thing we need to learn is how to be aware. And awareness takes a long time because we have lived many lives in unawareness. It has gone very deep in our systems of living and behaving; it has entered into every cell of our bodies; every aspect of our psyche is filled with sleep. This sleep, this unawareness, has to be broken. Once this sleep is broken then, the Sufis say, the disciple is ready to learn. It will depend on how ready and prepared one is. Osho shares the following parable on this point:

'There was a tradesman in a small village in the East who sat on his knees in his little shop, and with his left hand he pulled a strand of wool from the bale which was above his head. He twirled the wool into a thicker strand and passed it to his right hand as it came before his body. The right hand wound the wool around a large spindle. This was a continuous motion on the part of the old man who, each time his right hand spindled the wool, inaudibly said, "la illaha illa llah."

'There could be no uneven movement or the wool would break and he would have to tie a knot and begin again. The old man had to be present every moment or he would break the wool. This is awareness, this is *jikr*, this is life. Sufi means awareness in life, awareness on a higher plane than that on which we normally live.

'This old man was a simple man, but he taught his sons his trade, and his sons taught the trade to their sons and a *silsila* was created—a tradition of masters and disciples.'

One can apply awareness in whatsoever one may be doing. The only thing is, one must use it as a device. The enlightened sages remind us, when walking, walk—but be fully alert, remembering that you are walking. While eating, eat—but be fully alert that you are eating. When taking a shower, let each drop of water fall on you while remaining alert, watchful. Osho points out, Hindus call it *sakshin*, the witness. Buddhists call it *samyak smriti*, right-mindfulness. Kabir and Nanak call it *surati*, remembrance; and Sufis call it *jikr*.

Living in unawareness is the cause of human misery; that is how one suffers from his own invented nightmares. Otherwise, life can be a celebration. Osho says:

'We just have to become a little more silent to be able to hear it. And when we are absolutely silent, not only silent, but when we are silence—then we disappear, then we are part of this whole cosmic harmony.

'That is the meeting of man with God, of the part with the whole. We disappear in one sense, we dissolve in one sense—as an ego, as a person—but we become the whole, so in another sense we are for the first time. The dewdrop disappears but becomes the ocean. It is not a loser, it loses nothing. It loses only its small boundaries which were not worth keeping. In fact they were creating this whole trouble: the fear, the trembling, the constant fear that the sun will rise and it will disappear, it will die.

'Mahavira has said that man's life lived as an ego is just like a dewdrop hanging on a blade of grass, constantly afraid.'

Six Steps for Climbing the Ladder of Awareness

Awareness of Desire: The word *kama* is used for desire in the spiritual tradition of India and it essentially signifies the ego. *Kama*, or the desire, is seen basically as that which satisfies the ego. The difference between desire and lust is, while a desire or desiring

is a natural thing, however, when felt and expressed in unawareness, it can take a negative turn and become greed, megalomania, vanity and jealousy. Natural desires, which often manifest as our needs, are different from psychological desires. Natural desires are based on need, and they can be satisfied. Psychological desires are part of our discontentment driven by unawareness; and hence, they can hardly be satisfied.

There exists a veiled distinction between desire and need. Desire can be foolish, need is always sensible. Denying our needs can turn out to be harmful, even suicidal. By the same token, increasing desires can be equally harmful and suicidal. If desires become too overwhelming the tension caused by it can become unbearable. Again, if needs are denied, it can create tension, which may become unbearable. Here is an insight given by Osho:

'There are two types of suicidal minds: one which goes on denying its needs, and one which goes on transforming its needs into desires. And this distinction can never be made outwardly. No one else can decide for you what is the desire and what is the need. Your own awareness will be the measure, because to one, something may be a need and to another it may be a desire. So no ready-made answer can be given.'

In short, that without which you cannot exist is the minimum definition of need. However, ultimately, one's own awareness will decide and that too cannot be decided forever because today something may be a need, tomorrow it may be a desire. This moment it is a need, the other moment it may be a desire. But once there is positive awareness, once we become aware of our mind and its cunning and manipulating ways; once we become aware of our ego, its methods of strengthening itself, its methods of feeding itself, we will come to know the distinction.

Osho gives the following technique for raising such awareness: 'Whenever the mind becomes full of desires and passions, address

your mind thus: "O my mind full of ego and desires, remember the desires you have cherished in the past." Keep your old experiences in mind before embarking on a new journey; then you will not start on yet another journey through the old. Your desire will stand amazed and puzzled! This much awareness is enough to break the mind's mechanical way of working.'

Awareness of Anger: The enlightened beings have always reminded us that ego is the root cause of anger. The very idea that one is superior, higher, holier, or special can cause one to be constantly angry, because the world around us is not necessarily going to accept it.

In fact, everybody else also thinks in the same way and when there are so many people thinking in a similar vein, conflict is bound to arise, this conflict brings anger. It is ego hurting; it is ego feeling the wound; it is the unsatisfied ego that creates anger. And the spiritual insight given to us is that, nobody's ego can ever be satisfied; that is impossible.

The ego is bound to be wounded; the ego is very sensitive, very fragile. Hence Buddha says: unless you let go of the ego you will not be able to let go of anger. Anger is a by-product. One has to see very clearly the underlying cause. Our minds actually are so jumbled up, they are in such a mess; we are unable to figure out what is the cause and what is the effect.

Osho draws our attention to a critical fact. He says:

'Causes are not outside you. The basic cause is within you, but you always look outside, you always ask: Who is making me miserable? Who is the cause of my anger? Who is the cause of my anguish? And if you look outside, you will miss. Just close the eyes and always look within. The source of all misery, anger, anguish, is hidden in you, your ego. And if you find the source, it will be easy to move beyond it. If you can see that it is your own ego that gives

you trouble, you will like to drop it—because nobody can carry the source of misery if he understands it.'

However, although the effects may be many, but the cause is one; the root cause is one. Anger, greed, ego, lust, fear, hatred, jealousy, envy, or violence, whatever may be the effect; the cause is one and the cause is that we are not aware enough. Also, we may succeed in controlling anger, but that will not help. It will be just controlling the disease within, holding it inside. It will not make one healthy—it may even make us increasingly unhealthy. In the *Dhammapada*, Buddha teaches:

Be aware of the anger of the body.
Master the body,
Let it serve truth.
Be aware of the anger of the mouth.
Master your words,
Let them serve truth.
Be aware of the anger of the mind.
Master your thoughts,
Let them serve truth.
The wise have mastered body, word and mind,
They are the true masters.

So, anger is basically an effect; for anger, ego is the cause. But if we go deep within, watching our ego, we will be up for a surprise; the ego is also an effect—an effect of unawareness. Unawareness is the cause. We may look at it from any angle, from greed, from lust, from anger, from jealousy, or from possessiveness and we will always come to the ultimate cause: unawareness.

Osho's observation is:

'Absorbed thus in the mechanical process of the mind, the man who lives in unawareness misses all the opportunities he meets with in his life—and the opportunities are not few, but we are so clever in missing each of them. Every day there comes a

fresh opportunity to be new by not repeating the old—but we repeat the old. This happens because we do not bear in mind... remember your past actions. Before you get angry tomorrow, tell your mind, "O mind, remember all the occasions you have become angry before." First, stop for a couple of seconds and remember the occasions of being angry before, and then be angry. And I tell you, you will be unable to be angry then.'

Here is a beautiful poem in which we see enlightened view of Osho on this subject:

Love.
Are you really aware of what anger is?
Are you really aware of it when it is present?
I ask these questions
because man is never present in the present.
Man lives in the past
and only becomes aware of anything
when it has become a part of memory.
One becomes aware of anger and sadness
only when they are all over,
and then awareness is just pseudo-awareness;
it is not awareness but remembering
and remembering leads nowhere
because it is running in a circle.
Then one can fight with anger
but can never understand it,
and fighting with anger is anger—
of course more subtle
and therefore more strong and more poisonous.
So do not think about anger or sadness or happiness
and do not misunderstand remembering them as an awareness
but be aware when anger is present.
Be totally conscious of it,

live it consciously and do not escape from it
and then you will know what it is.
To understand it is to transcend it.
Then you will find a silence descending on you
which passes all understanding.

Awareness of Greed: Those who have seen the truth say: greed is not a desire at all. So essentially, one need not do anything about greed. What one needs to understand the emptiness within which we try to fill one way or another. We need to ask the question, Why am I empty? The whole existence is so full, why am I empty? Perhaps I have lost track—I am no longer moving in the same direction the existence is moving; I am no longer existential. Perhaps that is the cause of my emptiness. So I need to be existential. I need to let go and move closer to existence in silence and peace, in meditation.

When that happens, say the wise ones, for the first time one will not feel any greed—for money, for food, for things, for anything. You will live naturally, and whatever is needed you will find, you will live but not with a constant greed that cannot be fulfilled, a wound that cannot be healed. Desires create greed, greed creates competition, and competition creates jealousy. One thing leads to another, and we go on falling into the mess, into the turmoil of the inner world. It is a mad world, but the root cause of this madness is desire.

In the present day scenario, we find people in a hurry and the rush is to accumulate, to possess, under an assumption that having more is being happy. There seems a clear discontentment within, an inner emptiness, which is filled with more money, more objects, even ideas, than actually needed. Such greed breeds aggression. It makes one aggressive in pursuing the object of one's desire by any means possible. History pages are filled with examples of not only individuals, but tribes, nations, people committing heinous acts forced by their greedy mind. India, for example, was

regularly invaded by foreigners to be looted and plundered out of sheer greed.

A greedy man is always attracted by something to meet his greed. If you tell him and convince him that his greed is the cause of his misery, and that if he leaves greed he will attain a blissful state, he may accept the idea and try—because the idea is not really against his greed. You are giving his greed new pastures. He can enter into new dimensions of greed.

A greedy mind cannot suddenly become non-greedy; a violent mind cannot suddenly become non-violent. But if this is the case, then it seems nothing can be done. If a greedy mind cannot become non-greedy, and a violent mind non-violent, then what is the way out? Tantra has an answer to this enigma. Something can be done, but the dimension is completely different.

Commenting on one of the sutras of the Shiva-Parvati dialogue, Osho gives the following insight:

'A greedy mind has to understand that it is greedy and accept it—not try to be non-greedy. The greedy mind has to go deep within itself to realise the depth of its greed. Not moving away from it, but remaining with it; not moving in ideals—in contradictory ideals, in opposite ideals—but remaining in the present, moving into the greed, knowing the greed, understanding the greed, and not trying to escape from it in any way. If you can remain with your greed, many things will happen. If you can remain with your greed, with your sex, with your anger, your ego will dissolve. This will be the first thing—and what a great miracle it is!'

Patanjali makes this observation in the *Yoga* Sutras, 'Being bound together as cause-effect, the effects disappear with the disappearance of causes.' This implies being immoral is an effect. A person is greedy, but that is an effect, it is a consequence. A person feels angry; but that is an effect. According to Patanjali,

finding out the cause is important, there is no point fighting with effects because that is not going to help. One may fight with one's greed at one level, but it may appear again from some other corner. One may fight with one's anger, but in doing so it may get repressed and explode some time later. The consequences cannot be destroyed by fighting with them, per se. That is why yoga is not a system for teaching morality; rather, it is a vision for raising one's awareness.

Patanjali's teaching is that the real cause has to be found in becoming aware. Through awareness we will have to seek out the roots, the very cause. No rationalisation or attempting to justify the result will ever prove effective. Nor would it help to struggle and fight with the consequences of one's act done in unawareness. An increasing awareness alone, say the spiritual masters, can eliminate the possibility of recurring acts of anger, greed, or violence.

Hence, Osho reminds us:

'Either you exist as an ignorant man, unaware, in deep sleep—then greed, anger, ambition, ego, will follow you—or you become awake. Awakening is a jump! Then the second category of man arises. Then love, compassion, follow you. Then there is no greed, no anger.'

Awareness of Attachment: We cannot escape so easily from attachment. Regardless of our sincere efforts, the attachment will take new forms, new shapes. But then there is no point in fighting with attachment; what is required is understanding why it is there in the first place; and then, knowing the deeper cause of it. One overriding reality is that within us there is an emptiness, which we try to fill with whatever we can get hold of. We are not rooted, so we try to make anything work as our roots. The awakened ones show that when you are rooted in your self, when you know who you are, what this being is which is in you and what this consciousness

is which is in you, then you will not cling to anyone; then you will not suffer from attachment.

Our experience shows attachment is the root cause of all misery and our mind is such that it starts clinging to each and every thing. It starts becoming identified, attached. It does not know how to keep a distance; hence the misery. The sage in *Isha Upanishad* says, 'What grief or attachment can there be for a realised soul—a man of wisdom?'

Commenting on this sutra, Osho makes the following observation:

'Why has he (the sage) grouped these two—grief and attachment—together? They are grouped together because these two are one; they are unavoidable, concomitant parts of the same mental condition. Of the two, one is never alone. So understand them correctly. The mind, which is attached, will have sorrow and grief also; and where there is no attachment, grief cannot be there. In fact, grief comes when the object of attachment is destroyed. There is no other cause for sorrow. Suppose I have an attachment to somebody: if he dies I am immersed in sorrow. Sorrow is like a shadow that follows attachment. If I have no attachment to anybody it is impossible to be sad, even if I wish to be.

'...And remember, when grief comes, you will have to create a new attachment to save yourself from the grief. When grief comes you will have to find a new object for your attachment, to save yourself from the grief, to get away from it.

'If a person whom you love dies, you are not able to forget him until you find a substitute to love. It is difficult to forget the old attachment until you throw it away and replace it by showing your love to the new substitute.

'So grief comes when attachment is broken, and to run away from that grief we have to create new objects for our attachment. Thus this vicious circle goes on.'

Krishna, in his dialogue with Arjuna in the *Bhagavad Gita*, has given a great insight on attachment, 'Renouncing attachment for the fruits of their action and thus freed from the bondage of birth, wise men, skilled in the way of equanimity and discrimination, attain the pure immortal state.' (2.51) Here, Krishna is not talking about one's release from action itself; rather, his emphasis is on renouncing attachment to the fruits of action. He does not ask one to give up action and become inactive; he simply urges not to do something with a motive, with an eye on the results of the action. There is a meaningful difference between action and the fruit of action. It is in the interest of action itself, to make action real and total, that all wise men urge us to give up our desire for its result. Action without attachment to its fruit is at the heart of Krishna's teachings.

Ordinarily, if we were to give up our desire for the fruit of action, we would rather give up action itself. If someone asks to do something, but not to expect any result from it, one may say: it is sheer madness to suggest such a thing. Why should one do something if he does not want to achieve a result? Everyone works with a motive to achieve something, be it bread, or money, or fame. If there is no motive to work, why should one work at all?

However, when Krishna says that a wise man who gives up attachment to the fruit of action is released from the bondage of birth and death, he is not giving an incentive for a desire-less action. An action with an incentive can never be desire-less, because what is incentive but a desire for result? Krishna's 'freed from bondage' follows desire-less action as its outcome, as its consequence. Commenting on this sutra, Osho has this to say:

'Krishna does not say that those who want to be free from the bondage of birth should give up attachment to the fruit of their action. If he says so, he is providing a motive; he is contradicting himself. No, he only says that freedom or liberation is a consequence

of desire-less action, not its motive. One who desires liberation or freedom can never come to it, because desiring is the barrier. So the question is: How to work without attachment to result?'

Osho tells us, we believe everything happens according to our desires and expectations. He makes his point by sharing the following story:

'This crazy old woman had lived her whole life in a certain village, but one fine morning she left the village in anger, cursing the inhabitants with foul words. When the people enquired why she was leaving the village she said, "I go because of the torments that you have inflicted on me so long. But you will know what my going means to you from tomorrow. You will learn the lesson of your life." The villagers were surprised at the threat the old woman made. They asked, "What is that lesson you are going to teach us?" She said, "I am taking with me my rooster at whose crowing the sun rose here every morning. Now the sun will rise in another village where I am going."

'And the story says, when the old woman reached another village and her rooster crowed and the sun rose, she said to herself, "The idiots of that village must be weeping bitter tears, because the sun is now rising here, and they are in the dark forever."

'The old woman's logic is flawless. Her rooster crowed and the sun rose in the village where she had lived before. And when she went to another village and the sun rose with her rooster's crow, there was no doubt left in her mind that sunrise depended on her rooster's crow. But no roosters become victims of such illusions, only their masters. Roosters know they crow when the sun rises, but their masters think otherwise.'

Osho explains, this fable reflects human mind. He says: the future comes by itself; it is already on the way. We cannot stop it from coming; we cannot prevent tomorrow from becoming today.

Let man do his work and do it completely; that is enough. There is nothing beyond or outside of the act. We need not worry about tomorrow, which will come by itself.

People who are anxious for results often miss the moment of action, because the moment of action is now and here, while the result lies in some future. So those whose eyes are set on the future are bound to miss the present. If we are concerned with the result, if the result is what is important to us, then the action itself becomes meaningless. Then that would mean we don't love our work, we love only the result. Then we don't give our whole heart and mind to action—we do it reluctantly, haphazardly. Osho explains this point further:

'Krishna's vision of action without attachment to results is clear. He tells you to be totally in the present, in the moment. He tells you not to divide yourself between the present and the future. Not even a fraction of your attention should be passed on to the future. Then only you can act wholly and joyously, and then only will your action be total. Desire for results is a distraction from action, so give up your attachment to results and be totally in action.'

Also, in the *Bhagavad Gita*, Krishna points out to Arjuna that attachment creates delusion, the delusion is not there somewhere outside; the *maya* is not there outside. It is within, it is in our attitudes: attached, choosy, for this, against that, making distinctions, involved in likes and dislikes. We create our illusions and then we live in it, then we are overcome by it.

Furthermore, attachment is not love. Where there is attachment there is exploitation. In attachment, someone else is the object; subject is the self. Having a relationship with another is a relation that is centered around our ego. Love just exists. It is not for someone. It is not because of someone. It is just there.

Where love is for someone, there it is delusion; it is attachment; it is desire. The Upanishads say: we don't love others for the sake of others; rather, we love because it satisfies our desire, it gives us pleasure.

When love is only by itself, then it is not a desire; then it is prayer. Osho draws our attention to the fact that desires are like rivers flowing towards the ocean; love is like the ocean. It doesn't flow towards anyone. It is the self. It has no attraction to anyone; it exists in itself. The same is true of prayer. Desire is the flow, the pull and the tension. Prayer is a state. Prayer is peace in itself. Prayer is unconditional. Here is a story told by Osho:

'A prisoner who was condemned to be hanged came to a prison. Very soon the entire prison resounded with his devotion to God. Before the day dawned, his worship and prayer would start. His love for God was unbounded. A non-stop stream of tears also flowed from his eyes at the time of prayer. The feeling aroused by separation, created by the love of God, was there in every word of his song. He was a devotee of God, and the other prisoners became his devotees. The superintendent of the prison, and other officials too, started giving him due respect. His routine of praying to God continued almost day and night. His lips would utter "Ram Ram" while sitting up, sitting down, or moving. The beads of rosary were turning in his hand. Even his upper cloth had *Ram Ram* printed on it. Whenever the superintendent of the prison came for inspection, he found him busy in meditation. But one day, when he came, he found that the day had sufficiently advanced and that prisoner was sleeping soundly. His upper cloth, bearing *Ram Ram*, and his rosary were also lying neglected in a corner. The superintendent thought that he was perhaps not feeling well. But on asking the other prisoners he came to know that his health was all right; but who knows why the prayer of God had stopped since the previous evening.

'The superintendent woke up the prisoner and asked, "The dawn is long past. Have you not to worship and pray in the morning?" The prisoner said, "Worship and pray? What worship and prayer now? I have received a letter from home only yesterday that the death punishment has been converted into imprisonment for seven years. Whatever I wanted to be performed by God has been completed. It is no longer desirable to bother that poor chap for nothing."'

The wise ones remind us, misery comes out of attachment. We become attached to things. We cling to anything and clinging brings misery and the fact is that life goes on changing. It is in constant movement; it is never static. So to cling to such a life is to invite misery. Accept change, everything changes. In life only change is a non-changing phenomenon. So the man of understanding never clings to anything. Seeing that everything changes there is no point in creating attachment.

Hence, no one is responsible for our misery except our own unawareness, unawareness of the fact that life is a constant change. Seeing it, one does not get attached. Then whatever comes, whatever happens, whatever the case may be, one simply watches with awareness. One remains a witness. Unconsciousness, unawareness, is the cause of attachment.

Osho explains we need to remain alert so that we may not get too attached to the accidental—and all is accidental except our consciousness. Except our awareness, all is accidental. Pain and pleasure, success and failure, fame and ridicule—all is accidental.

Only our witnessing consciousness is essential. We must stick to it. Get more and more rooted into it.

Attachment takes us away from our potential, from our true being. We become focused on whatever we are attached to. Our awareness gets lost in objects of pleasure, in money, in people, or in

power and there are a thousand and one such things around us—a whole thick jungle to be lost in. The great Zen master, Bodhidharma teaches us, '...Don't become attached. Once attached, you are unaware.'

Hence, Osho warns us that non-attachment is the secret of finding oneself; then awareness can turn inwards because then there will be nothing outside to catch hold of. Then there is certain freedom where there is nothing to choose and cling to; and in this freedom, one can understand one's own nature. In Osho's words: 'A choiceless awareness: that is the ultimate key to open the innermost mystery of your being. Don't say it is good; don't say it is bad. When you say something is good, attachment arises; attraction arises. When you say something is bad, repulsion arises.'

Choiceless awareness, witnessing, means no attachment at all; this way or that, neither negative nor positive. One simply reflects whatever is. In that awareness, problems melt. In that awareness lies, falsities disappear and in that awareness when lies and deceptions have disappeared, one comes to see reality in the most unambiguous terms.

Osho draws our attention to the fact that misery is rooted in attachment to the body and bliss is rooted in non-attachment to the body. Hence, all the great masters have been teaching methods and means of non-attachment; getting 'dis-identified' with the body, with the mind, with everything that surrounds us, and of just remaining a pure witness. 'That is what we are,' says Osho, 'pure witnessing, pure awareness.'

Once you know the cause, Osho observes, everything is resolved and this is the cause—lack of awareness. No need to fight with our clinging, no need to fight with our attachment and repulsion, no need to even fight with the ego. What is needed is just becoming more and more aware; just becoming more and

more alert, watchful, or mindful. That very alertness will dissolve everything. Once the cause is dissolved, the effects disappear. He explains the point through a story:

'A thief came to Nagarjuna, a Buddhist mystic. The thief said, "Listen, I have been to many teachers and many masters. They all know me because I am a famous thief, in fact, the master thief of this kingdom, so I am known all over. Just the moment I reach them, they say, 'First you have to leave stealing, robbing people. First drop your way of life and then something can happen.' But that I cannot do. So the thing stops then and there. Now I have come to you. What do you say?" Nagarjuna said, "Then you must have gone to thieves, not to masters. Why should a master be worried about your stealing or not stealing? I am not concerned. You do one thing: you go on stealing, robbing people—but rob them with awareness." The thief said, "This I can do." And he was caught, trapped.

'After two weeks passed, he came back to Nagarjuna and said, "You are a deceiver, you have tricked me. Last night I entered for the first time into the palace of the King, but because of you I tried to be alert. I opened the treasury. Thousands of precious diamonds were there, but because of you I had to come out of the palace empty-handed." Nagarjuna said, "Tell me what happened." The thief said, "Whenever I would be alert and I would try to take those diamonds, the hand would not move. If the hand moved, then I was not alert. For two, three hours I struggled. I tried to be alert and take those diamonds, but it was impossible. Many times I took those diamonds, but then I was not alert so I had to put them back. Whenever I was alert, the hand would not move." Nagarjuna said, "That is the whole thing. You have understood the point."'

Without alertness one can get angry, violent, possessive, or jealous. But these are the offshoots, not the roots. Being alert, one

cannot be angry; one cannot be jealous, aggressive, violent, or greedy. Ordinarily, morality teaches us not to be greedy, not to be angry. That doesn't help much. Greed remains, anger remains.

Awareness of Power—the Ego-Mind: The natural desire of the human mind is to feel special—to become special in the ways of the world, to have much political power, to have money, wealth—to be special. The mind is always ready to go on an ego trip and if one is fed up with the world, then again the ego starts finding new ways and new means to enhance itself; it becomes spiritual. One becomes a great mahatma, a great sage, a great scholar, a man of knowledge, a man of renunciation. Again, one wants to be seen as special. Unless one relaxes into ordinariness, there will be stress and tension—one will never relax.

A person may try to attain power in this world, but then the same person attempts to attain power in the other world as well. First one wants to attain wealth in this world, then he tries to attain wealth in the other world. But the person remains the same; and the mind, its functioning, and the whole scheme remains the same. This is the ego trip. The achieving mind is the ego. A mind that is ambitious for money and prestige, ambitious for God, enlightenment and nirvana is the same mind—it makes no difference. They are all ambitions, all embellishments for the ego and the sages point out that neither attaining 'God' nor finding enlightenment as embellishments for the ego can ever serve the purpose for a true seeker.

The enlightened ones remind us: ignorance, unconsciousness and unawareness are the fires in which life gets consumed; while understanding, consciousness and awareness bring about a totality in which one's life is transformed into peace and happiness. The very energy that otherwise consumes life when in pain and misery gets transformed into bliss through awareness. There is nothing worse than ignorance and unawareness; but if a man lives in

awareness, every power he has becomes blissful. Energy is neutral; it is impartial. How energy is used depends totally on the individual. Living in awareness, without any intoxicant such as money, power, fame or prestige, is the way of the true seeker. In Osho's words: 'Awareness is your own power. And to depend on your own power brings a great freedom and a great authority and a great integrity. The mind is cut from the roots; soon it withers away. And the space that mind was occupying is no longer occupied by anything; it is now pure space. That is your real, authentic being.'

Narrating a story from the life of Swami Vivekananda, Osho points out as the power of the ego mind grows, one gets trapped in it:

'It happened in the life of Vivekananda in Ramakrishna's ashram, in Dakshineshwar, in Calcutta, Bengal...There were many disciples, and Vivekananda was one of the most intellectual disciples of Ramakrishna.

'There was a very simple man who was also a disciple—his name was Kalu, a poor man. He was so faithful, religious, emotional, that he had in his room hundreds of statues of different gods, because in India the traditional number of gods is thirty-three million. So he had hundreds of statues, and it was such a long affair to worship all those gods that it was only in the afternoon that he was able to take his breakfast.

'Early, at four o'clock in the morning, he would take a bath in the Ganges, and then the worship would begin. And of course each god had to be worshipped equally; otherwise somebody may get angry, somebody may feel offended. So the whole day was lost and everybody was laughing at Kalu: "What are you doing? Just one god is enough!"

'But Kalu said, "I have become so attached to these hundreds of gods—whom to reject? And whoever I reject will become annoyed.

So in this life it is impossible; I have to worship these hundreds of gods and I have to give equal time to each."

'Vivekananda was the most prominent in making a fool of Kalu. He said, "You are simply stupid—these are just stones! And you are wasting your life." But Kalu would not listen to anyone; he continued his way.

'One day Ramakrishna gave Vivekananda a certain method of awareness to practice: "Go into your cell, close the door and practice it." When Vivekananda came to a certain stage of awareness he felt himself so full of power that the idea came to his mind, if I say at this moment just within myself, to Kalu, "Take all your gods and throw them into the Ganges," he will do it. He was so certain of it. And he did it; he said to Kalu, in his own cell, just within himself, "Kalu, just collect all your gods,"—and this was the time when he was worshipping the gods—"and throw them all into the Ganges."

'And Kalu collected all his gods into a big bag and was dragging the bag down the steps when Ramakrishna ran after him, stopped him and said, "What are you doing?" He said, "Suddenly I heard a voice—it must have come from God himself, because there was nobody in the room—saying, 'Kalu, collect all your gods and throw them into the Ganges.' It was so powerful that I could not doubt it." Ramakrishna said, "Come back. Take your gods back and I will show you from where the voice has come." He knocked on Vivekananda's door. Vivekananda came out and Ramakrishna was very angry.

'He said, "Vivekananda, this is the last thing I had ever expected of you. I had told you to be aware, not to destroy a poor man's life. This is his whole life and he is no harm to anybody. He is so simple-hearted, so loving, such a beautiful man—how could you do it to him? Awareness is not for such things. And from

now onwards I will keep the key of your awareness; you will never attain the same power again."

Awareness of Jealousy: Common causes of human suffering are jealousy and possessiveness. So serious are these twisted emotions that children are often driven to sibling rivalry; talented and skilled individuals fail to progress up the ladder because of their poor interpersonal relationship with fellow workers or supervisors mistakenly guided by these emotional factors. Friendships are lost forever because one person fares better than another; and workable marriages are destroyed because as a consequence of jealousy and possessiveness, fear and anger replace mutual tenderness and understanding.

Experts point out that, in general, jealousy is experienced when something you have is taken away or is threatened by someone else—particularly in the case of one's friend, lover, or wife. Envy, on the other hand, is when one does not measure up to someone else; or when one very much wants something someone else has—a person, an idea, or an object. All of these emotions increase as our desire for the coveted person or object increases. Jealousy is of the most intense nature. It not only wants to hold something highly valued, but it also carries fear of losing it to the competition. As we look into the core of this phenomenon, we find groundless expectations and beliefs, projections and delusions, as well as a threat to one's security. The core, however, is an existential problem; it has mainly to do with the insecure nature of the ego. In jealousy and possessiveness, ego is always under threat.

Furthermore, desires create greed, greed creates competition, and competition creates jealousy. One thing leads to another, and we go on falling into the mess, into the emotional turmoil of the inner world. Indeed, it is a mad, mad world, but the root cause of madness is desire.

Desire means longing for more and strangely, people fail to recognise that any quantitative change is not necessarily going to bring satisfaction. Secondly, whatever one may have, someone else is sure to have more than that—it is a big world. Hence we see jealousy. Osho points out, 'Jealousy is the fever of the soul. Except meditation, there is no medicine for it.' Jealousy becomes destructive; jealousy becomes violence and jealousy is the shadow of desire. Desire always compares; and because of comparison, there is suffering.

Competition and jealousy are the root causes of our misery. There is no good competition—all competition is bad. Notwithstanding what the politicians and the priests may say, no competition is friendly. All competition is hostile and violent. Whenever there is competition, we become imitative; we start imitating those we feel have more than what we have. That is how we are distracted from one's own being and consequently face misery.

Jealousy means ego; jealousy means unconsciousness. Jealousy means that one has not known even a moment of joy and bliss; one seems to be destined to live in misery. Jealousy is a by-product of our misery, our ego, our unconsciousness. But watching our ego, we can see it is also in a way an effect—an effect of unawareness. Unawareness is the cause. We may look at it from any angle—from greed, from lust, from anger, from jealousy, from possessiveness—and we will always come to the ultimate cause: our unawareness.

The sages say, whether it is anger, hatred, jealousy, possessiveness, a thousand and one things may be there, but the real disease is one—unawareness. These are all manifestations of the same thing. Hence the only way to get rid of this mess, this chaos, is to be aware and once we are aware, we need not repress anything, we need not even drop anything; things start dropping on their own, they start disappearing on their own.

We can, of course, push down anger and act compassionately, but we know well that we have pushed it down into the unconscious and it is there. Any moment, a little unawareness and it will bubble to the surface. Going through this situation repeatedly, our whole life is wasted.

Those who have realised higher consciousness point out, awareness is like fire; it burns all that is wrong. It burns our ego. It burns our greed. It burns our possessiveness. It burns our jealousy. It burns all that is wrong and negative and it enhances all that is beautiful, graceful and Divine. They say, never fight with all these enemies religions have been talking about: greed, ego, anger, jealousy, or hatred. As Osho says, 'You cannot kill them, you cannot crush them, you cannot fight with them; all that you can do is just be aware of them and the moment you are aware, they are gone. In the light, the darkness simply disappears.'

With awareness, one cannot do wrong; and without awareness, one cannot do good. Hence what is required is to keep the thread of awareness running through all our actions. Then we will not face any hatred, anger, or jealousy. Not that we have dropped them, not that we have repressed them, not that we have somehow got rid of them. We do nothing of the sort.

This is the beauty of awareness, it never represses anything. Things simply melt in the fire of awareness and change and there are things which become more integrated, more profound, and stronger resulting into love, compassion, kindness, friendliness and understanding. Osho brings all of this into perspective:

'You are the awareness of all these things: possessiveness, jealousy, greed. Who is being alert? Certainly jealousy cannot be alert about itself; neither can possessiveness be alert about itself.

'There is, behind this whole drama, a witness. That is my hope and that is your hope—and it is the hope for a new humanity.

If you can be aware of these realities, it is not a difficult thing to drop them, because you are not them; they are separate from you. You have learned them in a society which is greedy, in which if you are not greedy you cannot survive.

'The very fact that you are aware changes your acts. Then you cannot sin. Not that you have to control yourself, no! Control is a poor substitute for awareness, a very poor substitute; it doesn't help much. If you are aware, you need not control anger; in awareness anger never arises. They cannot exist together; there is no coexistence for them. In awareness jealousy never arises. In awareness many things simply disappear, all the things that are negative.

'Awareness is not a method for transcendence. Awareness is transcendence. This constant awareness of your mind dissolves your greed, your anger, your sex, your hate, your jealousy, by and by. They dissolve automatically.

'There is no effort to dissolve them, not even any intention to dissolve them, not any longing to dissolve them. They are there, so rather than an intention to dissolve them, acceptance is more helpful. Accept your anger. It is there: accept it and be aware of it. These are two things: acceptance and awareness. And you can be aware only if you accept totally.

'You are not supposed to drop anything. You are not to create a fight; you are not to create a conflict. You are just to be watchful—with no condemnation, with not even a worry that these things are there. They are there—so what? You have simply to watch—this is how you are. In deep humbleness accept and watch. By and by you will see that the more your watchfulness arises, the more things start disappearing. In total awareness the mind simply does not exist. And all that is contained in the mind—jealousy, anger, sadness, misery, unhappiness and hell—they all simply disappear.

'Once you come to a peak of awareness, you will see that the only problem in life is how to be aware. All other problems are just by-products of not being aware. There is no need to fight with each problem separately. If you can simply become aware, that one solution will solve all. That is the panacea, the master key. It unlocks all the locks.

'Just remain aware and it will go. Nothing else has to be done about it. Jealousy can remain only if you are unconscious of it. The moment you become alert, it starts going. Just remain watchful. Bring it completely to your awareness, and when it grips you, just sit silently and see the whole cloud that surrounds. And don't leave anything unseen. All the parts, the whole mechanism, has to be seen, and then it will disappear...It is very human... because we have been made in such a way by society that jealousy is the outcome of it. The whole life's conditioning is to be jealous. The school, the college, the university, the parents, the society—everybody wants you to be jealous, because only out of jealousy can ambition be created, only out of jealousy can possessiveness be created, and only out of jealousy can you be made to become powerful, rich. If jealousy disappears, this whole edifice of society will fall. It is founded on jealousy; jealousy is the cornerstone of this society. It pervades everything, permeates everything.

'The man of awareness becomes like a sandalwood tree. All kinds of snakes are there: anger is there, greed is there, jealousy is there and envy is there; they are all there hanging on the tree, but the man of awareness is not affected at all. His perfume remains pure, he is not poisoned by them. On the contrary, those snakes become so hypnotised by the sandalwood tree that they forget all about their poison. It is as if they are snakes no more, dangerous no more. Awareness arising in you is such a transformation that greed loses its poison; anger loses its poison. They are destructive no more; on the contrary, they start becoming creative. The poison is transformed into nectar.'

Here let me quote a conversation between Osho and a seeker as reported in 'Jealousy and the Abyss' by William Pennell Rock:

'A friend of mine experienced a lot of pain in her relationships. She was very compulsive, and possessive. She asked her teacher, Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, (read Osho) about her pain, and he told her this: The ego, which arises out of the nothingness that we basically are, can have a negative or a positive response to the nothingness. The something that we are knows deep down that we're standing on nothingness. All of you know, deep down, that before the whole, you aren't anything. The negative response is subliminal terror. Against this fear of nothingness, you create the illusion that you are something. You back this project by preoccupation with realities, accumulating and possessing. That something illusory that you are is the one that suffers in jealousy. The entire structure is a negative or fearful response to nothingness.

'But Bhagwan (Osho) told my friend that this something called ego can also relate positively to nothingness. Only then can we move out of attachment into prayerful gratitude and heartfelt celebration of the other's being. Only then are we capable of real love. Only by saying a deep yes to nothingness, existence, the whole, do we come to be at home in nothingness. Eventually the positive response enables us to drop the something in favour of nothingness.

'You are just a bubble. You were nothing before; you are nothing now. An enlightened bubble is not concerned with its bubbleness. It just is. It doesn't appear anything special, yet it feels all, sees all just as it is. That is why it is said to be enlightened. This is a positive, pure response to our given existential situation.'[1]

Excerpts from:

Sufis, The People of the Path, Vol.1, Ch.3
Darshan Diaries, "The Golden Wind", Ch.2
I Am the Gate, Ch.2
The Heartbeat of the Absolute, Ch.18
Returning to the Source, Ch.5
The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol. 6, Ch.9
A Cup of Tea, No.247
Vigyan Bhairav Tantra, Vol.1, Ch.8
The True Sage, Ch.8
The Heartbeat of the Absolute, Ch. 8
Krishna: The Man and His Philosophy, Ch.19
The Earthen Lamps, #58
Unio Mystica, Vol.1, Ch.8
Darshan Diaries, "If You Choose To Be With Me, You Must Risk Finding Yourself", Ch.4
Yoga: The Alpha and the Omega, Vol.4, Ch.5
Bodhidharma: The Greatest Zen Master, Ch.15
Light on the Path, Ch.18
The Golden Future, Ch.37
The Hidden Harmony, Ch.2
The Ultimate Alchemy, Vol.2, Ch.7
Darshan Diaries, "The Great Nothing", Ch.20
Darshan Diaries, "Hallelujah", Ch.25
Darshan Diaries, "Zorba The Buddha", Ch.1

End notes:

1. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, Vol.23, No.2, Spring 1983, 70-84. Copyright ©1983 by the Association for Humanistic Psychology, reprinted by permission of the author at www.planetwaves.net

CHAPTER 9

ZEN: THE PINNACLE OF AWARENESS

There is a Zen story. Watching the flag of the temple fluttering in the morning breeze, two monks were arguing. One said, 'It is the wind that is really moving.' The second monk said, 'No, it is really the flag that is moving.' A third monk passing by said, 'Friends, neither the wind is moving nor is the flag moving; it is the mind that is moving.'

All agitation is in the mind and of the mind. Awareness of this fluttering, unsteady, moving mind is the primary concern of Zen. Zen has its roots in India. It was planted in China and it flowered in Japan. Zen Buddhists trace their origin, their path to Enlightenment, all the way back to Shakya Muni or Gautam the Buddha. Hence, to know the beginning of Buddhism in India is essential for understanding Zen.

One needs to know about yoga because the practice of Zen owes a great deal to yoga. Zen Buddhism incorporates in itself the philosophy of Mahayana Buddhism and the principles of Taoism,

which originated in China, as well. The Taoist influence needs to be acknowledged in the origin of Zen because deep similarities exist between Mahayana Buddhism and Taoist principles. It may just be a coincidence that Lao Tzu, the founder of Taoism was a contemporary to Gautam the Buddha.

Zen schools recognise Buddha as their first patriarch, their first Master. Mahakashyapa as the second patriarch and so on down to twenty-eight Indian patriarchs, ending with Bodhidharma who brought Mahayana Buddhism to China in circa 527 A.D. and is recognised as the first Chinese patriarch of Zen tradition. He also brought the concept of meditation to China. In Sanskrit meditation it is called *dhyana* and this was pronounced in the Chinese as *ch'an* or *ch'an-na* and in Japanese it came to be pronounced as Zen.

Zen masters have not given any rigid discipline. They simply impart their awareness. They say: be aware and you will find your discipline moment to moment. Be aware; awareness will show you the way each moment. Whatever is needed, you will come to know about it. What matters is responding knowingly, being alert, and that is all. In this respect, Zen is a path of liberation. It liberates us from our mindsets and set patterns of behaviour. One is simply required to find one's own rules, one's own responses to life in the light of awareness. Hence, one needs to keep the lamp of awareness burning. That is what Buddha taught: be a lamp unto yourself; be awareness to yourself. Then you will know what to do, how to do it, where to go, where not to go.

Zen contains the very essentials. It has no nonsense around it; it has no rituals, no chanting, no mantras and no scriptures. It contains just small anecdotes, small dialogues sharing awareness. It is a very condensed and crystallised teaching; it requires a person to be prepared to receive it and the only preparation is meditative awareness.

Awareness requires a lot of training and discipline; and hence, one must start with very simple actions. For example, while walking you can walk; and you can be aware that you are walking—each step can be full of awareness. While eating, just eat and be aware that you are eating.

In Zen monasteries they drink tea; they call it the 'tea ceremony' because while sipping tea, one learns how to remain alert and aware. Practitioners of Zen remain alert and aware, whether carrying water from the well, cutting wood in the forest, eating, sitting, walking, going to sleep, or preparing their beds—whatever they do, they remain completely alert.

These may seem like small acts; but to begin with, they are very helpful. It is better to practice awareness with small acts of daily routine. Zen teaches us, as one becomes more and more accustomed to awareness, as awareness becomes just like breathing, then one doesn't have to make any effort for it; it becomes spontaneous—then any act, simple or complex, any work is done in awareness. Osho gives a significant insight into understanding Zen and awareness.

'...It is questioned by many, why the word "awareness", or "watchfulness", or "witnessing" does not appear in the Zen anecdotes. The question is relevant...it does not appear in the words and the anecdotes are written in words.

'You will have to find it between the words, in the silences that happen between masters and disciples, or one master and another master. Awareness is not something Zen talks about because Zen is awareness.

'Zen has nothing to do with any 'about'. Philosophy can talk about awareness, thinkers can talk about watchfulness, teachers can teach what is witnessing, but Zen is awareness.

'You have to get hold of it; it is always there in every anecdote—but not so visible, not so tangible, not available to language. If you are trying to find it you will not find it, because every finding is by the mind. If you forget all about finding awareness and just be silent, you have found it. Zen is pure awareness...

'In your absolute silence, when the mind is not there, what remains? The mind is only ripples of the ocean. When the ripples are gone the ocean which was not visible because of the ripples... suddenly you realise you are it...'

The path of Zen starts with dropping thoughts, becoming more and more alert of the thought process. One becomes so aware that in that awareness, under that shining Sun of awareness, thoughts begin to evaporate and one is left in a total state of peace and silence. That is the path of meditation. Although it works through the mind, eventually it transcends mind. It cannot be brought through feeling, either. Then how to bring it? What is the Zen way to bring it? To bring it, the only way is meditation. It is attained through meditation. So we have to understand what meditation is. Osho explains:

'Gautam Buddha, the founder of Zen, the founder of all great meditative techniques in the world, defines it in one word. Somebody asked him one day, "Bhagwan, what is meditation? What is it all about?" And Gautam Buddha said a single word, he said: "Halt!" That was his definition of meditation. He says, "If it halts, it is meditation." The full sentence is: "The mad mind does not halt. If it halts, it is meditation."

'Meditation is a state of thoughtless awareness: Meditation is a state of non-emotional, non-sentimental, non-thinking awareness—when you are simply aware, when you become a pillar of awareness, when you are simply awakened, alert, attentive, when you are just a pure awareness.'

The moment one says, 'meditation', immediately the listener asks, 'On what?' because the word meditation in English is generally understood as meditating upon something and the words *dhyana*, or Zen, simply mean emptying oneself of all thinking; it is not a question of meditating upon something. Meditation is a state of absolute silence, of profound peace, of not thinking at all, but just being aware. Only in that awareness is one able to see the truth.

Excerpts from:

Live Zen, Ch.12
Zen: The Path of Paradox, Vol.2, Ch.3

CHAPTER 10

PERSPECTIVE

Before we look into the significance of preparation for realisation of one's Buddhahood, an overall perspective—in the context of what our present realities are and from what has been discussed above—emerges as follows:

'It is reported that, once Buddha was asked, "Are you a God?" "No," said Buddha. "An Angel?" "No." "A Saint?" "No." "Then what are you?" people asked. Buddha said, "I am Awake." Awakening of consciousness, removing the darkness of ignorance and seeing the truth face to face has been a primary pursuit of life on earth for centuries.'[1]

The sages and the mystics have relentlessly explored the inner world of the human mind and consciousness—the subjective dimension. They have looked within with the same objective view as a scientist looks outside with an objective view. Through their inner search these sages show that, although mind and consciousness are subjective, nevertheless, they also have

an objective reality. Through experiment and conscious effort, they examined the subjective reality objectively and developed a science of awakening, a technology of consciousness. Thus, they have renewed people's spirits, they have recharged our energies, and they have sharpened our intelligence. It is their greatest contribution to humanity and to human consciousness.

The vision and the wisdom of awakened ones carry a unique quality. Although, in our perception of horizontal time, they seem old—2,500 years or more old—but in terms of seeing their wisdom as a source of our vertical growth it is always new, always relevant and timely. To exist is not necessarily tantamount to 'be'. Being is an evolutionary, a dynamic phenomenon and existence is a linear, horizontal phenomenon. Birth, childhood, youth, old age and death, rise and fall in fortunes, success and failure—these are all movements in time, linear and horizontal. Being is a different dimension of movement—it is vertical in nature; it is timeless, endless and beyond any duality.

In a horizontal growth, one may accumulate much knowledge, much success, money, power, prestige, status, name and fame. But inwardly, the same person may remain as angry, jealous, prejudicial, greedy, egotistic, violent, racist, chauvinistic and religiously fanatical as ever. The twentieth century showed this reality in its ugliest form. Along with enormous gains achieved by mankind through science and technology, space travel and breakthroughs in medicine and health care, we also faced two world wars, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, poverty and hunger, many racial and ethnic conflicts and AIDS.

The twenty-first century has brought us to a crossroad. We are, of course, moving ahead in leaps and bounds as far as our horizontal growth is concerned. But we have also reached a point where we need to work on our vertical growth as well.

Along with the material gains we will have to move vigorously towards enhancing our emotional and spiritual growth.

The horizontal seems to be taking us somewhere, but reaches nowhere—just like chasing a horizon. The vertical, on the other hand, does not seem to be taking us anywhere; and yet, it leads us towards a point where being human, being an individual, being a spirit takes a new meaning, a new value, a new dimension.

One of the human weaknesses is to look at flaws, to identify what is missing. Dennis Prager calls it, 'the missing tile syndrome'. Imagine looking at a tiled ceiling from which there is one tile missing. Regardless of how beautiful the ceiling may be, we will most likely notice the missing tile and miss appreciating rest of the ceiling. We fail to recognise in such a case that in human life there is nothing like a perfect ceiling—there will always be missing tiles. One may come across a perfect ceiling; however, that possibility does not apply to life; life is not perfect. If it were to be perfect, it would be a dead life. A plastic flower can be perfect, a real flower cannot; because it is alive, it is subject to growth; it is not static, it is dynamic.

When we look at the forces of stupidity, death and destruction, prevailing currently, and as we see their ever increasing power and fury, one may pause and ask, 'Why has the wisdom of our enlightened beings not triumphed? What about the power of their vision?' However, it is also a fact that our culture and civilisation would have been much worse if it were not for the treasures of wisdom we have inherited and have tried to live by, even with flaws and imperfections.

What we need to recognise is, even smaller acts and events born of our unawareness need to be addressed immediately. This is called the 'small broken window theory'. If in a house, we ignore one small broken window, and another small broken window, then

one can assume that eventually the whole house may fall apart. As one example of our individual and collective unawareness, let us briefly look at what a consumer society we have become, and how the market economy is controlling our life style.

In an article in *The Atlantic Monthly*, June 1997, Mark Sagoff reports that the world income measured in real terms has increased by over 700 per cent since the Second World War. One fifth of the world's population possesses more than four fifths of the world's wealth, 20 per cent of world's population consumes 80 per cent of world's resources and it is interesting that the remaining 80 per cent are doing their best to live the way 20 per cent are living. In the same article the writer refers to Benjamin Barber wherein the author describes market forces which, 'Mesmerise the world with fast music, fast computers, and fast food—with MTV, Macintosh and McDonald's, pressing nations into one commercially homogeneous global network; one McWorld tied together by technology, ecology, communication, and commerce.'[2] The very idea that almost everything is for sale and that almost anything can be bought has undermined our cultural values, our social responsibilities, and our ability to see beyond the materially motivated actions. The assumption that having more and hence producing more is the *key* to happiness has turned out to be a great illusion. So, the fact is that today we are working harder, consuming more, and yet enjoying life less and less.

So long as our attachment to material things persists, so long as we remain hypnotised by the insatiable desire for money to buy, and so long as we believe possessions will free us from misery, inner poverty will continue to remain. Actually, money is not the issue; our passion for money, our addiction to possess is at the root of corruption, lies and deceit. The material culture of today is forcing us to question our needs and it is compelling us to find whether we are satisfying these needs at the cost of our inner peace and contentment.

So the basic issue we need to resolve is: whether to strive incessantly for abundance, or to find a better way, a more reassuring way, towards meeting our financial needs and at the same time attaining inner fulfilment as well. The actual reality is that we need a spiritual revival. In terms of our future probability, we need to rediscover the quality of 'religiousness' based on spiritual awareness, rather than following a religion based only on rituals and scriptures, guided by dos and donts, and motivated by either fear or greed.

The issue is: are we ready to reconsider our priorities and do we have the will to change? Apparently, we prefer to work through the same mindset, through the same order and system of options. We do not so much resist change; we resist changing. Mankind has continuously struggled for freedom: freedom from slavery, freedom from prejudice and discrimination, freedom from monarchy and dictatorship. Nevertheless, our slavery to the mind—the conditioned mind, the hypnotised mind—still continues.

Hence our biggest challenge is to make ourselves free from all that baggage, which has been a heavy load upon us. We may be free in a way, but we are not moving freely, we are not flowing. Inwardly, we are still carrying a heavy weight of repressed hatred, violence, greed, envy, fanaticism and so on. We will have to drop this load, become light and weightless so that we may take a quantum leap in consciousness.

We need a kind of Marshall Plan to rebuild our inner world from scratch. We need to save the inner self, take a fresh look at ourselves, and go deeper into our inner reality. We need to discover, rather rediscover our inner self, our consciousness.

Reconstructing the self today will help reconstruct the world outside. A map of the outer world can be brought in order if we succeed in putting the inner map in order. Time is now ripe

for the collective unconscious to be transformed into collective consciousness.

Interestingly, because of the incredible breakthroughs in science and technology, we now see the possibility of not having to work as many hours as before. Consequently, with more free time, we have a golden opportunity to unfold our spiritual and creative potential, which, as human beings, is an integral part of ourselves. We need to learn how to unlock our locked energies—physical and psychological. We need to recognise we have gone far away from ourselves; we need to come back, make a reverse journey. Here is a story Osho shares which illustrates this point:

'Once Buddha came to his monks; he was going to deliver a sermon. He sat under his tree. He had a handkerchief in his hand. He looked at the handkerchief. The whole congregation also looked at what he was doing. Then he tied five knots in the handkerchief and then he asked, "What should I do now to unknot this handkerchief?" And he asked two questions. One: "Is the handkerchief the same when there were no knots on it or is it different?"

'One monk, said, "In a sense it is the same because the quality of the handkerchief has not changed. Even with knots it is the same, the same handkerchief. The inherent nature remains the same. But in a sense it has changed because something newhas appeared. Knots were not there, now knots are there. So superficially it has changed, but deep down it has remained the same."

'Buddha said, "This is the situation of the human mind. Deep down it remains unknotted. The quality remains the same." When you become a Buddha, an enlightened one, you will not have a different consciousness. The quality will be the same. The difference is only that now you are a knotted handkerchief; your consciousness has a few knots.

'Second thing Buddha asked: "What should I do to unknot the handkerchief?" Another monk said, "Unless we know what you have done to knot it we cannot say anything, because the reverse process will have to be applied. The way you have knotted it has to be known first, because that will be the way again in the reverse order to unknot." So Buddha said, "This is the second thing. How you have come into this bondage, this has to be understood. How you are conditioned in your bondage, this has to be understood, because the same will be the process, in reverse order, to un-condition you."'

Commenting on this story Osho says:

'If attachment is the conditioning factor, then non-attachment will become the un-conditioning factor. If expectation leads you in misery, then non-expectation will lead you into non-misery. If anger creates a hell within you, then compassion will create a heaven. So whatsoever the process of misery, the reverse will be the process of happiness. Un-conditioning means you have to understand the whole knotted phenomenon of human consciousness as it is...It is not a reconditioning, remember. It is simply un-conditioning; it is negative. If it is a reconditioning, then you will become a slave again—a new type of slave in a new imprisonment. So this difference has to be remembered: it is un-conditioning, not reconditioning.'

The coming generation will find it more useful and welcoming to learn how one can change individual consciousness for the eventual transformation of collective consciousness. That, at a deeper level there is no separation, no division or boundary in space, time and subjectivity. As the famous scientist, Erwin Schrödinger observes, 'The sum total of consciousness is one.'

If indeed, as sages remind us, the purpose of spirituality is healing, wholeness, holistic, and, if we sincerely wish to heal

nations, races, societies, then we will have to get rid of those ideas, perceptions, and values which are totally detrimental to achieving this noble objective. We need trans-national, trans-denominational, trans-sectarian, trans-cultural spirituality—purely transformative in its nature and application.

We learn from the enlightened beings that, realising consciousness, which lies beyond all divisions and all conflicts, is at the core of spirituality. That has been the eternal quest, whether one looks into the Upanishads of the East or listens to Socrates of Greece who said, 'Know thyself.'

Rather than seeing the world in terms of parts and fragments, which when put together becomes whole, we need to recognise that the part is the whole—that we live in a world of wholes within wholes. This is exactly what *Isha Upanishad* teaches us:

Aum. That is the whole. This is the whole.
From wholeness emerges wholeness.
Wholeness taken from wholeness,
Wholeness still remains.

Over a century ago William James recognised that consciousness is not a thing but a process. The sages of the Upanishads took the inward journey and travelled through this process. From the depth of their experience they revealed four *mahavakyas*, great statements. Their inquiry into the reality of consciousness began with the question, '*Ko hum?*', 'Who Am I?' And its answer we find in the *Mandukya Upanishad*: '*Ayam atma Brahma*', 'I, this very self, this *Atman* is Brahman.' Another sage gives the same answer by saying: '*So hum*', 'I Am That.' Consciousness and the Divine are not two separate entities; qualitatively, they are same. In the eighth century the great revolutionary mystic, Adi Shankaracharya, also declared: '*Aham Brahmasmi*', 'I Am Brahman.'

The second question in their search was: 'Who Are You?' In *Chhandogya Upanishad* we find the answer where the sage tells the

young seeker, Shwetketu, '*Tat twam asi*', 'Thou Art That.' The third inquiry centers around the question: 'What is all around us?' And the answer given is that the entire Universe, the whole Existence, is nothing but Brahman. Naturally, then, the next inquiry was: 'Is Brahman a Person?' And the insight comes through the statement: '*Pragyanam Brahma*', 'Brahman is Pure Consciousness, Pure Energy, Pure Truth.'

Significantly, though, not only the vision of the Upanishads but that of the Eastern vision as such is reflected in the idea of *sakshin*, the witness, the watcher, the non-judgmental observer. For us to have any experience, two components are essential: one, there must be an object of experience; meaning, that which is being experienced—a sensation, a thought, a feeling, or any object of our sense perception. Secondly, there must be a subject experiencing it—an unidentified experiencer of the mundane experience, one who is having the experience of an experience.

Einstein's view was that we may be wrong to believe we can separate the experiencer completely from the physical world (or, as Upanishads point out, even from our psychological world) that is being perceived. In short, he proposed that the observer partly determines how reality is perceived. Later, the German physicist, Werner Heisenberg went even further and showed that the very act of observation itself affects that which is being observed. As Peter Russell points out:

'Working in the field of atomic physics, he showed that it was impossible to measure both a particle's position and its speed beyond a certain limit of accuracy. The more accurately you measured one aspect, the less accurately could you measure the other…Thus he showed that the act of observation itself affects that which is being observed.'[3]

In other words, by virtue of observation, the observed goes through a change, a mutation. So, for scientists, these two

conclusions went contrary to the view taken until that time, namely: the observer and the observed are separate, or detached entities. It became apparent that somehow there is a deep connection between the field of our experience and that which is in the middle of the field—the detached experiencer, the witnessing consciousness.

Krishna gives an elaborate explanation of the witnessing consciousness in the *Bhagavad Gita* called, *Kshetra-Kshetragya Vibhaga Yoga*. *Kshetra* is the immensely vast field of experience—all that is within the scope of our sense perceptions and beyond. *Kshetragya* is the experiencer, the witnessing consciousness (the Soul or *Purusha*). Krishna says: 'Although residing in the body, the Soul is transcendental and said to be the witness...This witnessing consciousness is just a passive, unidentified onlooker, *upadrishta*.' Krishna describes this witnessing consciousness in the following words:

'As the vastly expansive sky is unsullied because of its subtlety, even so the embodied Soul is neither a doer nor is it tainted because it is beyond all the properties. The Soul illuminates the whole *kshetra* just as the one sun lights up the entire world. They who have thus perceived the distinction between *kshetra* and *kshetragya*, and the way of liberation from the maladies of nature, with the eye of wisdom attain to the Supreme Spirit.'

Just before Krishna's death his closest friend and disciple, Uddhava, approached him and asked if there was any final teaching for him. Krishna's answer is contained in the *Uddhava Gita*. It is an independent work and as profound as the *Bhagavad Gita*. At one point in his discourse, Krishna brings the focus onto the witnessing consciousness. He says: 'The *buddhi* (intellect) as well as all knowledge gathering instruments are mere mechanisms, and have no consciousness in themselves. There must be a consciousness behind them, an intelligent agent, which is the perceiver (the *sakshin*).' (2.23)

For the sages of the Upanishads, knowing, realising this state of being an observer, a witness or a *sakshin* is the key to freedom; it is the way to attain peace and joy. According to the Upanishads, a wise person is one who is only a witness—non-identified, non-attached to the world of objects and the fluctuating states of mind. We find in the *Mundaka Upanishad* a poetic description of the *sakshin*, the witness:

'Two birds that are companions, ever associated, dwell on the very same tree. Of these two, one eats the fruit of divergent tastes, and the other looks on in silence.' (3.1.1)

'On the same tree, the individual soul, though active, feels sad and moans in its un-wisdom. But on seeing the power and glory of the other, the higher spirit, it becomes free from sorrow.' (3.1.2)

Let us look at this metaphor:

- Two birds: one is the individual self/soul/*jiva*. And the other bird is the Universal Self/Soul/Consciousness.
- The individual self/soul, due to ignorance/unawareness/ *avidya*, is conditioned by the body and the mind on account of its association/identification with the sense objects.
- Tree refers to the human body.
- Because of its identification, the individual self/soul eats fruits of its action, goes through an experience.
- Fruit of divergent tastes refers to experiences of pain and pleasure.
- The Universal Self/Soul, the pure consciousness, as a witness to the acts of the first bird, simply watches as a detached and silent observer.

Thus, the whole emphasis is growing from being just an individual soul or *jiva* to knowing and realising the witnessing consciousness. We may consider the following for a closer understanding of the experiencer or the observer. One may come across three types of people:

- Those, who wish to be seen, noticed, recognised: We may call them the *performers*. They are always in some kind of action/activity mainly to impress others. They want to look good, and smart. The whole effort is how to *look* the best, not necessarily *be* the best. Their effort is, appearing the best, or superior.
- Those who wish to be *spectators*: Perhaps a vast majority falls in this category and psychologists are concerned that more and more people are becoming spectators, turning people into 'couch potatoes', watching games and shows on the TV. People watch a dance, but they hardly ever dance; they watch tennis, but they hardly ever play tennis.
- Those, who wish to be *observers*: Very few individuals attain this quality, a state of being an *observer*—a dispassionate, unidentified observer.

A *performer* is the one whose eyes are on the spectator, to impress. A *spectator* is the one whose eyes are looking at the *performer*. Both are looking outside of themselves, both are involved in the other. An *observer* is the one whose eyes are on himself. When eyes are on the object one becomes a *spectator*; when the eyes are on the seer, on the one who is seeing the object, that makes one an *observer*—one who is detached, distanced, and non-judgmental. Then, there is a gap created between the subjective responder, the soul/*jiva*/self, and the observer of that response.

This witnessing consciousness can stop our mechanical, habitual and conditioned responses. Then, one can see, but without being overwhelmed by what is being seen. In that moment one is free to be at a distance, though fully aware, fully open to experiencing. In such a case one acts, but one is not the doer; one feels, but one is not the feeler; one thinks, but one is not the thinker.

When an object is seen subjectively, there is an immediate identification, an immediate association with the seen object.

For example, watching a movie, a play, or reading a story, looking at an event, all these, when experienced subjectively, result in identifying with them. Consequently, we may cry, laugh, feel angry or sad. However, one could become alert that very moment and make the subjective experience an object to see, watch, witness, without projecting one's likes, dislikes, feelings, emotions, or expectations. Thus, an object is seen subjectively and that subjectivity then becomes the object of an observer, the witness; the seer becomes the seen.

So, when a person becomes free from being a performer or a spectator, when one has no desire to exhibit for recognition and no desire to see for personal satisfaction, one comes to recognise that both showing and seeing are part of a trap of the ego-mind; that both bring discontentment. Then, one is no longer interested in either. One becomes free just to be—unattached, unburdened, relaxed in the moment.

As has been mentioned earlier, Patanjali in his *Yoga* Sutras makes it clear how this seer within, the pure consciousness, gets mixed up or identified with the outer objects, or with our thoughts and emotions. We are gifted with this seer, the observer. However, because of the constant restlessness of the mind, both intellectual and emotional, this seer gets so obscured, so concealed, that, as we say, *its silent voice is never heard.*

This is the state where the seer assumes experiences of our senses and gets identified with them. For instance, a mirror reflects an image; and, in a way, while the object is being reflected, the mirror seems to become the image. But it is not the image. The mirror essentially remains separate from the object before it, but it assumes the form of the object in front of it.

Similarly, the seer, the witnessing consciousness is separate like the mirror. However, in order to keep it separate, unattached,

unidentified one needs to calm down the restless mind; one needs to stop the continuous fluctuations of moods and thoughts and this is possible only through meditation. Meditation is the right method for disassociating the seer from the seen, 'the observer from the observed', as J. Krishnamurti explains.

We can see the same phenomenon by looking at life made of four circles:

- **The circle of action—the outer world of our activity:** It is the outermost, the most tangible part of existence. Our life is nothing but continuous activity. We may not necessarily have any idea what we are doing, how we are doing it, or why we are doing it, but activity, action, is an integral part of living.
- **The circle of thoughts:** Moving inward into our inner world, we come across the circle of thoughts—less tangible but very much apparent and verifiable.
- **The circle of feelings:** Moving deeper into our interior, we touch upon the circle of feelings, emotions, love, compassion—very subtle, not easy to understand, but very much part of our life.
- **The centre:** Beyond all of these, as we go deeper within, we can reach the centre. We can reach our witnessing consciousness, the seer, or the observer. Those who have reached this centre declare this witnessing consciousness as our true nature; there is nowhere to go beyond it. One cannot go deeper than that. This is the very foundation.

Osho explains the phenomenon of witnessing consciousness metaphorically in the following words:

'Watching, witnessing, being aware seem to be small words to solve the whole complexity of the mind. Millions of years of heritage, tradition, conditioning, prejudice—how will they disappear just by watching?

'But they do disappear, because as Gautam Buddha used to say, "If the lights of the house are on, thieves don't come close to that house, knowing that the master is awake." Because the light is showing from the windows, from the doors, you can see that the light is on and it is not the time to enter into the house. When the lights are off, thieves are attracted to the house. Darkness becomes an invitation. As Gautam Buddha used to say, the same is the situation about your thoughts, imaginations, dreams, anxieties, your whole mind.

'If the witness is there, the witness is almost like the light; these thieves start dispersing. And if these thieves find there is no witness, they start calling their brothers and cousins. It is as simple a phenomenon as the light. The moment you bring the light in, the darkness disappears. You don't ask, "Is just light enough for darkness to disappear?" or, "When we have brought the light, will we have to do something more for the darkness to disappear?"

'No, just the presence of the light is the absence of darkness, and the absence of the light is the presence of darkness. The presence of the witness is the absence of the mind, and the absence of the witness is the presence of the mind.

'So the moment you start watching, slowly, slowly as your watcher will become stronger your mind will become weaker. The moment it realises that the watcher has come to maturity, the mind immediately submits as a beautiful servant...

'...Then the mind becomes slowly convinced that it is the master itself. And for thousands of years it has remained your master, so when you try to be a witness it fights, because it has completely forgotten that it is only a servant. You have been so long absent that it does not recognise you; hence the struggle between the witness and the thoughts.

'But final victory is going to be yours, because nature and existence both want you to be the master and the mind to be

the servant. Then things are in harmony. Then the mind cannot go wrong. Then everything is existentially relaxed, silent, flowing towards its destiny...

'...Mind has become accustomed to being a master. It will take a little time to bring it to its senses. Witnessing is enough. It is a very silent process, but the consequences are tremendously great. There is no other method that can be better than witnessing as far as dispersing the darkness of the mind is concerned...

'Hence I can say to you...there is only one meditation in the whole world and that is the art of witnessing. It will do everything—the whole transformation of your being. It will open the doors of *satyam*, *shivam*, *sundaram*: the truth, the godliness and the beauty of it all.'

So, meditation is the process, and witnessing is the goal. Meditation changes the whole direction—the entire quality of our action, emotion and knowing goes through a radical change. As one brings in meditation, it becomes a catalytic agent for the witnessing consciousness to manifest in our lives.

The *Bhagavad Gita* illustrates the three paths that can lead one to the witnessing consciousness. The three yogas described in *Bhagavad Gita* are the three methods of meditation as follows:

- Karma Yoga (Yoga of Action): Action and meditation.
- *Bhakti* Yoga (Yoga of Love): Feeling and meditation.
- *Gyana* Yoga (Yoga of Knowing): Knowledge and meditation.

Through these paths or disciplines one can reach the witnessing consciousness.

In yoga, the study of energy is very comprehensive. The yogic idea of energy includes not only those energies, which are part of our biological processes but it also includes what is known as 'mental energy'. The energy gets blocked at different levels in the form of muscular tension as well as mental tension and in both cases the

trapped energy is basically non-productive, a waste. Particularly, at the mental level when one is affected by fear, anxiety, worry and depression a great deal of energy is lost.

This vast amount of energy, which is potentially available to us, can be harnessed through practising meditation. Meditation gains access to the blockages and thus transforms the energy into experiencing the awakening of consciousness. It is time to apply meditation as a quantum theory in terms of 'quantum psychology' or 'psychology of awakening'. Osho calls it, 'The psychology of the Buddhas.' This awakening of consciousness is the next evolutionary step for mankind.

Through the application of 'quantum psychology' humanity can transform itself from being a destructive force to becoming a channel of compassion and creativity. Through meditation, mankind can change from being a largely neurotic, schizophrenic society into becoming awakened, healthy and blissful species.

Excerpts from:

Yoga: The Alpha and the Omega, Vol.1, Ch.8
Bhagavad Gita, Ch.13. 22, 32-34
Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram, Ch.22

End notes:

1. Smith, Huston, *The World's Religions*, p.82, Harper Collins, 1991
2. 'Jihad vs McWorld', *The Atlantic Monthly*, March 1992
3. Peter, Russell, *The Global Brain*, p.141, Global Brain Inc., 1995

CHAPTER 11

TAKING RESPONSIBILITY

An individual has to take the responsibility for his evolution, health and happiness. In our unconsciousness, we shift the responsibility to anyone but ourselves. It may be fate, Nature, family, society, a friend, or parents. The moment one gathers courage enough to bring the focus onto oneself and looks within, a new beginning takes place in life and with that, one is on the path of self-transformation. Looking within is neither blaming nor condemning oneself; the purpose mainly is to own up to oneself.

We hardly ever know what our essence is, what our true nature is; but we do know, we do recognise our existence or our physical presence. On the other hand, a rock's essence is a given. It is already there and so is its existence. Its existence is its essence; that is its true nature. But with humans it is different. One is born and he brings his existence along; but the essence, the core reality, has to be discovered.

One creates one's essence every moment—how one lives, how one speaks, how one moves. Only an individual is responsible for creating essence, no one else. Giving essence, giving true meaning to life, is the greatest challenge and the uppermost responsibility. Not just what we know matters, how we use what we know, how we incorporate it in enhancing the quality and meaning of life, matters even more. Hence the key to attaining peace and joy, harmony and creativity lies in the very understanding of 'how to'.

The twentieth century emphasised what we know; the wealth of knowledge. It unravelled incredible mystery around us. It opened up a floodgate of facts and information. The focus now will need to be not just on what we 'know' but on 'knowing', on an ongoing process of discovering and rediscovering the inner connection to the outer objective world. We will need to erase the perception that the energy going out and the energy coming in are two distinct phenomena.

In other words, we will need to experience the movement of consciousness from subject (consciousness) to object and back again to subject in the same instance. The Upanishads call it 'the double-arrowed perception'. Based on this, they developed *pratibhigya*, the science of understanding. It will be of immense value if we learn this science of understanding so that we may handle constructively the fast emerging data, facts and information.

We will have to learn how to place them in a relationship with one another so that, instead of getting lost in its maze, we may bring a new, all inclusive, and harmonic meaning to human life. For us to achieve this ability, we will need to develop and sharpen our senses. We will not only need to see, but distinguish; we will not only need to hear, but listen; we will not only need to touch, but feel it; we will not only need to speak, but communicate.

Thus, the more all rounded our senses become, the more we can gain clarity and understanding. When all senses become pure, sensitive, sensuous, so alert and alive, the whole life gains a new intensity. One attains a great zestfulness. The world remains the same, and yet not the same; trees look greener, the roses rosier, the sound of a bird more pleasing, the people more alive, more beautiful—the same world, but a totally new experience.

So, basically, if we looked at the part in light of the whole before, now we will be wise if we look at the whole in light of the part. As mentioned earlier, the sages of the Upanishads point out that in the ultimate sense the part is the whole; it is not separate from the whole. The most obvious task cut out for us, therefore, is to establish our broken ties with the whole. It is very apparent how mankind has wounded human civilisation; the enormous damage we have caused to our environment, our animal world, as well as to ourselves.

It is imperative, that we re-sensitise humanity—make ourselves more responsible, more alert, and more aware. This will require what Jones Salk calls, 'a meta-biological evolution', which will not involve survival of the fittest, but as he says, 'survival of the wisest'. He very succinctly points out, 'We should begin by trying to understand the forces at work to recognise, first, that we can do something about the situation; and second, that we must do something about the situation.'[1]

Meditation is what we urgently need to bring in our lives. It is doable; it is possible, and it seems to be the only alternative for creating a new humanity, a new world. Meditation means, while remaining engaged in one's horizontal growth, staying open and available to seize any opportunity that would raise one's consciousness and add a vertical growth in life. It is an individual effort; and an individual effort *can* make a difference in the

new millennium. An individual will have to prepare oneself so that he can make the maximum, if not the optimum, contribution, not only to one's own growth, but also to the qualitative change of society at large. This will basically require conscious self-development, self-management, or meditation.

A few useful indicators for one's conscious self-development can be as follows:

- ***Ask*, what sages of the East say:** 'Who Am I?' Am I the body? Am I the ego-mind? Am I the person who has a certain personality? Am I really a Hindu, a Muslim, a Christian, or a Buddhist, or are these merely labels? What do I mean being a human? Could it be that I am beyond all these labels, categories, and divisions?
- ***Find*, the values cherished by you:** What are the values I cherish most, honestly? How do these values contribute to my happiness and to the happiness of my fellow beings? I have heard, in a public debate, one Pastor saying, 'Unless you first come to the church you will never find the gate to the Kingdom of Heaven.' The second Pastor responded, 'No, until you first look for the gate to the Kingdom of Heaven, you don't belong in church.' Apparently, here the individual, his freedom, choice or search, is of no consequence. What matters is all outside of the individual's responsibility. Hence the issue remains: how do I relate my inner personal values with the values of the society?
- ***Make*, an honest assessment:** How can I contribute? Not whether or not I should contribute—there need be no room for ambiguity, or uncertainty. We all need to contribute; because we are all inter-connected and hence responsible towards each other, the environment, and the world at large. What we are rarely sure about is how to contribute. In the

name of contribution, we often find people taking a chip on the shoulder and setting out to change the world, the society. Or, we find people contributing out of their egoistic desire for recognition. How one can truly contribute depends largely on how much one is willing to act without expectation. Expectation ruins the very beauty and spirit of one's action. We will have to learn, therefore, how to contribute, physically, mentally, or spiritually, without any expectation—just out of fun, out of joy, out of a spirit of celebration.

End notes:

1. *Psychology Today*, pp.50-55, March 1983

CHAPTER 12

THE ONLY WAY TO BE

A supreme example and illustration of taking responsibility is available in the insights given by Gautam the Buddha.

Buddha never claimed to be other than an ordinary human being. He claimed no inspiration, no message, no power received from any external God or superior being. He attributed his understanding, his vision, to human intelligence and effort—an intense and total effort on the path of self-realisation. His basic premise was that every human being is potentially Divine. Every person carries the possibility of attaining enlightenment, Buddhahood, if the person makes a sincere, honest effort with earnestness and totality.

Buddha's fundamental insight is that an individual is one's own Master; there is no higher being or power that sits in judgment or controls one's destiny. In *Dhammapada* Buddha says, 'One is one's own refuge, who else could be the refuge?'(XII 4). He asks his disciples to 'be a refuge to themselves', and never to seek refuge in anybody else.

Buddha taught and inspired one to grow and work towards one's liberation. One has to tread the path alone. An individual needs to acknowledge and be firmly aware of the fact that one is the rock, one is also the chisel, and one is the very image that will eventually emerge while working upon oneself. Buddha's emphasis is not on faith or on believing; in consonance with the vision given in the Upanishads, his emphasis is on seeing, on knowing, on understanding through direct perception. The question of belief arises when one is unable to see—see directly everything, always.

The moment one sees, the question of believing disappears. Hence his teaching is identified in terms of *ehi passika*—inviting us to 'come and see', not to come and believe. We find in Buddhist texts references to enlightened beings as individuals who possess 'the dustless and stainless Eye of Truth' (*dhamma chakshu*). Hence, seeing is wisdom. One sees things as they are, in their 'such-ness'—*yatha bhutam*.

In reference to his own enlightenment, Buddha says, 'The eye was born; knowledge was born; wisdom was born; science was born; light was born.' Thus his emphasis is on seeing through knowing and wisdom; not believing through borrowed knowledge or through blind faith. Seeing and not believing is essentially an act of taking responsibility—to search, to find, and to see for oneself.

This approach is totally different from the way of 'obedience'. It is due to his emphasis on individual responsibility that he allowed freedom to search and find. In the *Mahaparinibbana Sutta* we come across Buddha saying that he never thought of controlling the *sangha* (order of monks), nor did he want the *sangha* to depend on him.

In his farewell address, speaking to his aide and disciple, Ananda, Buddha makes this point very clear:

'...Surely, Ananda, should there be anyone who harbours the thought, "It is I who will lead the brotherhood," or, "The order is

dependent on me," he should lay down instructions in any matter concerning the order. Now the Tathagata (Buddha), Ananda, thinks not that it is he who should lead the brotherhood, or that the order is dependent on him...'[1]

In the *Patika Sutta*, for example, it is said that a monk announces he wants to leave Buddha's entourage. Buddha says, 'Well, O *Bhikshu*, did I ever say to you, "Come, be under my rule?" "No Lord." Or, did you ever say to me, "Lord, I will be under your rule?" "No Lord," said the monk.'[2]

This anecdote shows clearly that for Buddha freedom is an integral part of searching truth. One's emancipation depends on one's own realisation, not on the benevolent favour from God or from any external power or authority as a reward for one's obedience. Hence we do not find any commandments given by Buddha that must be obeyed. Instead, he stressed becoming more aware, more conscious. There is no room for sin because for Buddha there is no question of 'disobedience'.

Thus, in Buddha's view, responsibility is not in the sense of obedience, but rather in the sense of such precepts as karma, compassion, or following *dharma* and the concept of karma is not to be confused with the idea of 'moral justice' or with the principle of 'reward and punishment', because such ideas are based on the acceptance of a supreme being, a God who sits in judgment. Karma, whether seen through the vision of Krishna or Buddha, has essentially nothing to do with justice or a final judgment. Rather, it has to do with the natural law that, we are responsible for our karma, our action—and not for its consequences or for its results. Each of our karmas will have a consequence for which we alone are responsible—no one else. Hence so much stress on karma.

The wisdom offered by our sages can be of immense help, but we have to put our act together; we will have to walk the talk.

We need to go back to the basics, the *AUM*—Awareness, Understanding and Meditation. It is not enough to say, 'Love others', we have to find out why we don't love others. It is not enough to say, 'Don't be violent, practice non-violence', we need to know why we are violent in the first place.

We are now living in a small world; we are almost next-door neighbours. It is now possible to transform collective unconsciousness into collective consciousness. Indeed, the problems are affecting almost the whole of humanity. Hence, solutions, meaningful and constructive ideas, can equally bring new directions that will benefit the whole of humanity.

However, for this to happen we will have to make a resolve, individually and collectively, that we *want* to find new and positive solutions and for that we *are* willing to drop our egos, our conditionings, our conventional ways of dealing with problems. What is needed, therefore, is an 'inside-out approach'; a recognition of the fact that the outer shift in paradigm is possible only when there is a shift in our inner paradigm.

We need to keep in view that the 'small broken window' theory essentially means we must fix the small broken window with the same awareness we may have while rushing to take care of the possible larger calamity. Each individual is that small window, which is integrally, organically connected with the whole building and, if indeed, that window needs to be fixed, then it has to be fixed *now*, immediately, urgently.

Meditation, self-introspection, self-awareness, can help fix the small window; it always has, invariably and unfailingly. Meditation is the only antidote to our outer and inner poisons. It essentially means taking responsibility for one's self-transformation. On taking responsibility, here is a profound statement by Osho:

'So when you ask whether it is possible now, in this age, for a Buddha to be or a Christ to be, you again ask a meaningless question.

Anywhere, in any time, Christ is possible; Buddha is possible, because the possibility belongs to the innermost realm of your being, not to the procession of events that we call history. It doesn't belong to history; it doesn't belong to time. It belongs to the innermost realm of Being, which is in eternity, not time. You can be a Buddha. Take the jump and you will be! And time will not hinder you...This factor about time is irrelevant.

'It must be understood deeply and pondered over because we are very cunning and very self-deceiving. If someone says that in this age to become a Buddha is not possible, then you begin to feel, it is not my responsibility to transform. And there are religions that say that in this age becoming a Buddha is not possible, and in a way every religion says it. Any organised religion will say that a Jesus is born only once, "He is the only begotten Son of God, and now no one can be a Jesus again. You can only be a Christian, not a Christ."

'Jains say you cannot be a *teerthanker*, you cannot be a Mahavir. The quota is finished. Only twenty-four persons can be *teerthankers*. There can be no twenty-fifth. Mohammedans will not allow you to be a—*paigamber*—because Mohammed is the last *paigamber* and he has brought the complete and the final message from God. No alteration is possible now, and there is no need, they say. Every organised religion will say to you that now you need not bother to be a Mohammed or a Mahavir, so just follow. You can only be a follower. Why? Why do they say this? For two reasons: deep down you like it very much, and the responsibility is not upon you to transform yourself. The time is bad, so you are not a Jesus. It is not your responsibility.

'Religions...say, "In this *kaliyuga*, in this age of sin, no one can be a Christ, therefore, you are not one." Then it is not your responsibility...you could flower like a Jesus at any moment. You are ready, but the time is not helpful. Everyone likes this deep

down, appreciates it. Then you can be whatsoever you are. There is no burden on you to flower into a Buddha...'

Excerpts from:

Digha Nikaya II, Mahaparinibbana Sutta
Majjhima-Nikaya, III, Dhatuvibhanga-Sutta (No.140)
The Ultimate Alchemy, Vol.2, Ch.6

End notes:

1. Burtt, E.A.(ed.), *The Teachings of the Compassionate Buddha*, p.49, Mentor, 1991
2. Davis, Winston, *Taking Responsibility*, p.14, University Press of Virginia, 2001

PART III

PRACTISE

PREPARATION

Preparing oneself means removing obstacles lying on the path towards self-development. If we remove hate, love starts flowing. Remove the negative, and the positive starts unfolding itself. In this sense, the whole preparation is via negativa. It is almost as if a rock is blocking a small stream—you remove the rock and the stream starts moving. With the rock blocking the path, it would not have been possible for the stream to flow.

Preparation is life affirmative. Generally, when spiritualists say, 'prepare', they mean drop enjoying, drop delighting in life, move against life; start destroying all attachment, all love and celebration. But such approach is totally counterproductive. Preparation means dropping all conditionings, our prejudices, leaving aside all we think we know and do not know. Preparation implies becoming as innocent, as open and available as possible. Becoming innocent is the preparation. In preparation one becomes free of all conditioned ways of being and living which were given by the family, society and religion; free from prejudices which were

given to us or which were picked up by us from the surroundings; free from borrowed knowledge gained, or ingrained, one way or another.

Every meditation is a preparation. The preparation is for growing in meditative awareness. All meditative efforts are simply a preparation for the miracle to take place—self-transformation. Meditation is both the means and the end. It is a preparation for becoming conscious of our unconsciousness. Meditation removes the blockages of energy, physical as well as psychological, and releases the energy to raise the quality of our well-being. Meditation has now become part of the mainstream. 'Scientists study it. Doctors recommend it. Millions of people—many who don't even own crystals—practice it every day. Because, meditation works.'[1]

Meditation is not an activity—one does not 'do' meditation, one can be 'in' meditation. One is either in meditation or one is not, but one never does meditation as an activity. Meditation is cessation of all activity. Also, meditation has no goal, objective, or end to meet. Hence, meditation in itself is both a means and an end. Meditation is not an achievement; meditation is a non-achieving state of mind, a state of self-fulfilment, a state where one is enough unto oneself.

Enlightened ones say the Beyond is eternal, unchangeable and existential; it is something that is possible to experience only if an individual can go beyond mind. Mind, they say, may be a useful instrument in knowing and relating with the transitory world, but as far as the eternal is concerned, mind is the greatest barrier. Meditation is a state where the role and influence of mind ceases and where it comes to a point of rest. It is in this state of utter restfulness, relaxation and silence that one sees the truth face to face.

In understanding what meditation is, a few terms need to be made clear. First, the activity of 'thinking' generally goes

on undirected. One thought leads to another—what Freudians call thinking by 'association'. There is no logical connection; we are led by scattered thoughts, day and night. Thinking becomes contemplation when thoughts are given a focus; when they are directed towards one point. Working on a problem, examining pros and cons of an issue are examples of contemplation. Such directed, focused thinking is logical, and rational. Thoughts may come from various directions but the focus remains unchanged.

Staying steady at one point, applying all thinking energy intensely, and not allowing the mind to move away from one point is concentration. In ordinary stray thinking, thoughts are scattered. In contemplation they are directed, in concentration there is no movement, just fixed attention on one object, idea, or point of focus. Ordinarily, a person thinks without any rhyme or reason, unfocused, and inattentive; while a scientist contemplates, and a yogi concentrates. When a yogi concentrates on a mantra, he collects all his mental energy and fixes it on the words and sound of the mantra.

Meditation, on the other hand, is a state of 'no mind'. It is a state where one transcends mind. The usefulness of mind ends with meditation. Mind can be applied only up to concentration. In meditation the mind has no place. That is the reason why meditation cannot be grasped through mind. One has to experience it; one has to be in it.

In meditation, mind is suspended; there is only awareness, the unperturbed consciousness. Meditation is like a calm pool of water with no ripple, no disturbance. In Osho's words: 'Whenever you can find time for just being, drop all doing. Thinking is also doing, concentration is also doing, and contemplation is also doing. Even if for a single moment you are not doing anything and you are just at your centre, utterly relaxed—that is meditation.'

How does the mind become non-existent? How does one attain the state of non-doing? This question leads us to look at two important factors. The first is, the importance of technique or method in meditation. Are techniques necessary? Is any doing required to reach the point of non-doing? The second, what is that state of non-doing?

Over the centuries many techniques have been devised by different masters. Effort, a total effort, is an integral part of spiritual search. This effort is relevant and useful only to the extent that it brings the vital energy to a point beyond which no movement is possible. There is an enormous gap between the mind and the state of no-mind. Any technique or method, when it clicks for one, becomes helpful in bridging this gap. Ultimately one uses mind to go beyond it; one goes on doing until the doing becomes meaningless and one arrives at a point of non-doing, peace and silence.

In terms of techniques, Osho has used catharsis as an essential part of meditation. It shows a radical departure from the conventional methods of meditation. Osho's insight is that at this point of human evolution, the mind has become so conditioned with so much rubbish accumulated in the name of culture, religion, or nationalism, and so on that the individual has lost a sense of responsibility and propriety towards fellow human beings and the natural environment.

Repression caused by the denial of all that is natural and spontaneous, all that is human and life affirming has created such madness in the world that, without finding a way to overcome it, peace and happiness will always remain a distant dream for mankind. Without going through a cathartic process, in Osho's view, nothing meaningful or beautiful can ever be created. Meditation in this regard serves as a cleansing mechanism. It is like taking an inner bath; creating an empty space within so

that peace and silence may descend like grace. Osho explains his methodology of catharsis and cleansing as follows:

'I begin with your insanity, not with a sitting posture. I allow your insanity. If you dance madly, the opposite happens within you. With a mad dance you begin to be aware of a silent point within you; with sitting silently, you begin to be aware of madness. The opposite is always the point of awareness...So I begin with a catharsis. First, let the suppression be thrown into the air...If you are ready to throw everything, if you can allow your madness to come out, within moments there is a deep cleansing. Now you are cleansed: fresh, innocent.'

As human life is increasingly becoming stressful, a great deal of attention is being given to meditation. Stress seems to have turned into an epidemic. This epidemic is proving to be extremely costly in health care—for individuals as well as for businesses.

It is reported that more and more office visits to physicians are for stress-related illnesses. Stress is now being acknowledged as the 'silent killer'.

Research studies indicate a wide range of stress-related disorders that are potentially responsive to meditation. Physicians are open to prescribing meditation as a therapeutic technique. However, regardless of whatever techniques may prove useful, by virtue of being a technique it does not become 'meditation'. Meditation is a far more profound phenomenon than following a certain technique. Osho makes this point very clear:

'All techniques can be helpful, but they are not exactly meditation, they are just a groping in the dark. Suddenly one day, doing something, you will become a witness. One day the meditation will go on, but you will not be identified. You will sit silently behind; you will watch it. That day meditation has happened; that day the technique is no more a hindrance, no more a help. Meditation is witnessing.

'To meditate means to become a witness. Meditation is not a technique at all...In this ultimate sense meditation is not a technique; meditation is an understanding, awareness.'

How to be conscious of the unconscious is the basic principle underlying meditation. Is the effort worth it? If, as humans, we wish to live sanely, creatively, happily and contribute in the richness of life, then the effort is worth it. The body and the mind have their pains and pleasures. However, a witnessing awareness is free from pain or pleasure—it is unattached, unperturbed, silent, peaceful, alert and unafraid. Those who have attained this state say, once the witness arises, the mind disappears, one awakens to the realisation that consciousness is beyond mind and body.

Witnessing is a powerful and a viable alternative for transcending emotional scars and negative attitudes towards life in general and towards human relationships in particular. These scars and attitudes can, in most cases, be traced to our childhood experiences and the conditionings imposed by the family, the society and the religious establishment. However, though the path to transcendence is difficult and arduous, each individual needs to explore his inner world and come to see both the light and dark sides within himself. This is the only way one may come to realise one's true nature—free from all scars, fears and conditionings.

Meditation does not mean chanting mantras, which one may enjoy doing, nor does it mean thinking or mental reflection. Neither is it concentration or focusing, nor is it practising various yoga postures. Essentially, meditation is a knack—the knack of non-judgmental observation, witnessing. Witnessing needs to work basically on three levels: the body, the mind and the emotions. The body is the easiest part to witness. It is the gross part of our personality. While involved in various activities, one may watch the body—its motions and movements, but without any judgment

or interpretation. Simply observe every movement as if the body were somebody else's. Suddenly we can become aware of how we normally make the same movements, but in a robotic way, mechanically and habitually. By simply watching, however, we become conscious, aware, alert and decisive in making the same body movements.

The mind is more difficult to watch. It is not as gross as the body is; rather, it is subtle. It is more 'inside', and trickier to see. Thinking, mostly random and incoherent thinking, occupies the mind predominantly. The difficulty in watching the endless trail of thoughts is because each thought simultaneously brings in judgment, evaluation, preference and identification. Thinking is a non-voluntary activity, which, the experts say, drains our energy. The frequency and intensity of fleeting thoughts is such that there is no gap between one thought and another. Hence, witnessing thoughts is a challenge for one whose mind is constantly buzzing and leaving no room to experience silence.

Emotions too can be watched, but they are even more subtle a phenomenon than are the thoughts. We often face strong emotions such as anger. In a tense situation, for example, someone hurls an abusive word. At that moment, rather than expressing the swelled up anger provoked by the other individual, one can just acknowledge that anger is there, inside.

Without choosing to do anything about the swelling anger and by just passively watching its presence, immediately the anger loses its power; a gap between the person and the anger is created and that brings about a new situation—the person is no longer controlled by that emotion; instead he becomes the master of it. Simply by watching with a non-judgmental observing mind, the thoughts begin to recede and disappear; the emotional energy begins to lose its intensity and gets dissolved.

This is how meditation works: it gives the option to *respond* with an alert and a witnessing mind rather than *react* compulsively out of a habitual and a conditioned mind.

One may ask: if the mind is being witnessed, then who is witnessing? Indeed, who am I? Am I the body, am I the mind, or am I the witness? This is the point where the Western psychological view, that we are the body, or that we are the mind, differs from the Eastern view. If one can witness the body or the mind, then certainly one cannot *be* either the body or the mind. Suddenly you see a gap, a space between you and your mind, between you and your body; between you and your conditioning—in fact, between you and the whole weight of values, and expectations imposed by the society. Meditation creates this space between ourselves and the mind.

Western psychology with its view that we are mind leaves us in the trap of conditionings set-up by the family, the society, and the religion with no choice but to function through that conditioned state. Its remedy as provided through the vast psychiatric and mental therapeutic industry is aimed mainly to adjust the mind. The Eastern understanding is that adjusting the mind would amount to, in modern day parlance, fixing or tuning a car in the garage. It cannot bring about a sustainable solution for making one's life meaningful. One can see that despite all the time, money and effort invested to implement Western psychological approaches to our misery and confusion, there is precious little to feel assured about its success. Disturbed people are seen all around—but particularly those who are in positions of power.

Hence, the insight of the enlightened ones is clear: meditation is the golden key that can lead us from darkness to light, from misery to happiness, and from the slavery of our conditioned minds to the joy of spontaneous freedom. Witnessing is a simple but profound state of meditation. It simply means: an unprejudiced, non-judgmental observation.

Normally, we never just notice or watch ourselves or others. We judge and the judgment arises from our conditioned ways of being and seeing. The judgment arises more as a mental projection—it never sees things, people, or situations as they really are. What is needed for one to do is not to get identified; rather, get back a little, create a distance between you and the mind, which is the source of judgment. For example, almost endless thoughts crisscross our minds. We either get identified with thoughts that are pleasing, or we struggle to push away thoughts that are not so pleasing. In either case, we get caught by thoughts and the mind remains occupied with a meaningless chatter. According to psychologists, such meaningless chatter wastes human energy and leaves one in a state of anxiety, inactivity and often in a state of depression. Instead, one can just be a witness, an observer, a watcher, looking at the ceaseless traffic inside the mind. Thoughts may crisscross, desires and passions may arise, dreams and fantasies my appear, but one simply stands aloof from all of it—watching it, seeing it, observing it with no preference, with no judgment.

In essence, life is a continuum between movement and rest, action and let go, tension and relaxation, using and regaining energy. In view of this fact, we can see stress as an inevitable and necessary process with which the human organism adjusts itself to changing situations and prevailing conditions. One must not take physical, mental and emotional health for granted; one needs to work for it with a sense of commitment. It is a continuous process of rejuvenating oneself. Awareness at all the levels of our existence, therefore, is the cornerstone of meditation.

The human organism reacts in stressful situations with the same pattern of response. Repeated for years, our physical, mental, emotional responses become habitual, conditioned. Unconsciously, we move, think, sense, feel in known ways only—we avoid unknown territory. The individual stress pattern is directed mainly by the unconscious.

By becoming aware of our conditioned responses and patterns of behaviour, we expand our freedom to choose an authentic way of life—we discover the dignity of being the masters of our action.

Meditation is an ancient relaxation technique, the effects of which involve various psycho-physiological processes. The psychological processes include dealing with stress stimuli and 'de-automatisation'. The physiological processes include reduced metabolism and brain wave coherence.

A scientific study by Dr Dean Ornish has been widely reported in the media. His work has convincingly shown that a mind-body programme, which contains meditation, can be effective in not only preventing, but even reversing, coronary-artery blockage.

The basic point we need to understand, however, is that meditation is essentially mind management. Mind has various layers. Psychologists try to find the meaning of each layer and interpret it. Meditation bypasses the superficial outer layers: stored fear, repressed anger, sexuality, etc. It dives deep through these layers and attempts to reach the hidden inner layers of our conditionings and bring them out on the conscious level.

Being constantly occupied brooding about the past or worrying about what may happen in the future, the mind is rarely in contact with the present. Through meditation the out-of-control chattering slows down and it eventually disappears. Thus the unoccupied state of mind brings a refreshing experience of awakening to the mysteries and beauty of life.

Poor life style, emotional conflict, mental stress and tension with consequent energy depletion, or inherited predispositions are some of the main causes that affect our health adversely. It has now been widely accepted that a number of our physical ailments are directly related to our disturbed mental state. Meditation is helpful in overcoming physical discomforts and diseases.

While medication may help in healing the physical body, meditation heals the individual from within and thus works as a preventive measure.

It has been reported that practising meditation regularly helps in overcoming addiction to drugs, tranquilisers, or alcoholism. It helps reduce hypertension, insomnia, depression, anxiety and other such malignant illnesses. Essentially, meditation consists of first going beyond the spheres of words and thoughts. Words—language carries a significant place in showing who we are. Yet, this is a superficial part of our communication; below it is the sphere of thoughts. Words give way to thoughts. We mostly deal with words, but have very little understanding of how thoughts work before words give them a certain shape. Not all that we think gets expressed in words. What comes out via language is just a tip of the iceberg; the rest remains beneath, underwater. Hence we get puzzled about how something came out in our speech that was not really what we thought, or what we wanted to say. We, it seems, are not fully connected with this hidden world of thoughts.

The first sphere, of speech, is known in the yogic insight as *vaikhari*. The second, of thoughts, is known as *madhyama*. But beyond words and thoughts is the third sphere, which without meditation we have no way of knowing. It is known as *pashyanti*, or the sphere of seeing.

Seeing through the inner eyes—a totally different dimension of seeing, or cognition, than how we see through our outer eyes. The sages of the Vedas and the Upanishads say, 'This knowledge, this wisdom, is seen, not heard.' As if the cognition takes place on the screen of human consciousness and according to the science of meditation, even beyond this third sphere is the last one where nothing is said, nothing is heard, nothing is seen; there is just total silence, utter stillness, complete cessation of all and every activity.

It is in this very unique dimension of meditation, the silence, the sages say, that one experiences bliss; not just peace, but a state of joyfulness for no reason in particular. Just to be is enough, just being is so fulfilling, so blissful. Hence, meditation in its ultimate sense is arriving at a pure state of consciousness, which is wordless, thoughtless and soundless. It is being totally in tune with existence. How one arrives here, through which path or following which method is not that important. What is important, however, is that one finds something that was already there—it just needed to be discovered.

Whichever way one may enter into meditation, it basically turns on body-electricity, says Osho. It makes the energy flow and as one flows with this energy, one begins to lose sense of the body or sense of the material plane. The non-material sense or the sense of connecting with the energy begins to grow. One comes to experience not the body, but the energy and the body, the matter, has a limit; energy is limitless. In experiencing the totality of energy, one gets tuned with the existence, the Universe.

The notion of pervasive energy is deeply imbedded in the ancient cultures of Asia. For example, the Hindus call this energy prana; while the Chinese call it *chi*.

Those who meditate say this vast amount of energy, which is potentially available to us, can be harnessed through practising meditation. Meditation helps release the bodily and mental blocks, thus transforming the trapped energy into experiencing consciousness, in becoming alert and aware.

Consciousness can be seen as a clear pool of water in which all our experiences, interactions, activities are reflected. When the consciousness is disturbed, when it is in turmoil, all that is reflected in it begins to shake; it begins to rattle. When the consciousness is calm, however, undisturbed and silent, anything that is reflected in it also becomes calm, silent and steady.

In other words, all that is reflected in consciousness is essentially the mind and its workings. Hence, disturbed consciousness, that is when it is in turmoil, the mind is in full manifestation of its power and the consciousness is invisible. When the consciousness is calm and silent, the mind is invisible; it ceases to manifest its presence.

By its very nature, the mind is never known to be steady, unwavering, or silent. Hence, one comes to recognise an interesting phenomenon: either mind is present or it is absent; mind and no-mind, these are the only two possible states. When truth is seen through the mind, it becomes our *sansara*—our world of relationships, our world of unsteady, insecure and repetitious activities. It is a world of our mental projections—what is known in Vedanta as *maya*. When, on the other hand, this very world is observed or experienced through no-mind, in the absence of mind, we see things as they are; we see that which is—free from the mental projection.

The sages have pointedly reminded us that the mind is a playground of thoughts and emotions, ideas and impulses and they have an enormous control that is spread at all levels of our human existence. Then what needs to be done? The enlightened ones say: no need to do anything—just become aware, watch and observe them. Watch the mind; be aware of its presence, its play, and its subtle tricks. Just be a witness of thoughts and emotions—simply be a non-judgmental observer of their play and interplay.

The sages say that the witnessing consciousness shines like sun, and such as under the glare of sun the dewdrops evaporate, similarly under the glare of the witness the mental afflictions become powerless—they also evaporate, disappear. Osho also points out that the witness is not part of the brain; though it uses brain as part of a mechanism. The brain in itself has no witnessing power. Witnessing consciousness is a totally separate reality.

So, meditation is least concerned with a form or an object to be meditated upon, or with the formless. Meditation is essentially devoid of any subject or object, any deity or entity. All these fall within the sphere of mind and meditation is basically a cessation of the mind in the sense of its transcending mind. Meditation is not anti mind; in that state one is simply no longer controlled by the mind and its conditionings. Beyond the point A and the point B—the subject and the object—there is the third point. It watches both A and B. It experiences both A and B. It is a witness to both A and B.

Osho calls this third point, this witnessing consciousness 'the Buddha'. This consciousness is achievable by anyone who puts forth an earnest effort. The pointers, the process, and the preparation all are means towards arriving at this third point, at this witnessing consciousness. Osho explains:

'The Buddha simply means pure witnessing. The Buddha is only a symbol of your eternal existence. Just remember one word—witnessing. This simple word is the whole of religion, is the whole of spirituality, is the whole of all that is known as truth, as beauty, as good, as godliness. Just witness—you are not the body. Witness you are not the mind, witness that you are only a witness, just a pure consciousness.

'This is your Buddha. This is your very nature. This is your intrinsic potential.'

Excerpts from:

Meditation: the First and Last Freedom
Communism and Zen Fire, Zen Wind, Ch.3

End notes:

1. Joel Stein, Quoted from *Time*, 4 August 2003

CHAPTER 14

MEDITATION TECHNIQUES

Over many centuries, many different techniques of meditation have been designed and applied. For example, in the Hindu system there is the science of yoga known as the *Raja Yoga* of Patanjali. His step by step, methodical system is known as *Ashtanga Yoga* or the eightfold path of yoga.

Buddha has given his famous techniques of *Vippasana* and *Anapanasati Yoga*. The emphasis in these techniques is on watching one's breathing—inhalation and exhalation—with total attention. The Buddhist Zen technique, *Zazen*, is a sitting meditation watching breathing and the moving thoughts.

Although these ancient techniques are profound and highly effective, they ask for time. The modern age is such that time is short and life is much more complex. We need meditation techniques that are relevant and applicable under the present conditions. Osho has designed effective techniques suitable to the human mind and the human conditions of today. His techniques basically include four components:

- Breathing
- Catharsis
- Witnessing
- Celebration

These are called Active Meditations. Since it is rather difficult to go straight into the passive and silent state, these meditations include stages where one's body is actively and often vigorously involved before finally arriving at a motionless and silent state.

The following techniques are some of the Active Meditations (Osho Active Meditations™) practiced alone or in a group. For more details, readers can direct themselves to www.osho.com.

Osho Dynamic Meditation™

Each session of this meditation lasts for an hour and is divided into five stages. Though this meditation can be done alone, it is recommended to attend the session in a group as it is more powerful. Also it is important to note that it is an individual experience and you should remain oblivious of the company. The best way to ensure this is to keep the eyes closed throughout, preferably using a blindfold. To achieve the best results you must attend the session empty stomach and wear loose and comfortable clothes.

- **First stage, ten minutes:** Breathe chaotically through the nose, concentrating always on exhalation. The body will take care of the inhalation. The breath should move deeply into the lungs. Do this as fast and as hard as you possibly can—and then a little harder, until you literally become the breathing. Use your natural body movements to help you to build-up energy. Feel it building up, but don't let go during this stage.
- **Second stage, ten minutes:** Explode! Express everything that needs to be thrown out. Scream, shout, cry, jump, shake, dance, sing, laugh; throw yourself around. Do not hesitate; keep the whole body moving. A little acting often helps to

get you started. Never allow your mind to interfere with what is happening. Be total, be wholehearted.

- **Third stage, ten minutes:** With raised arms, begin jumping and say this mantra aloud, 'Hoo! Hoo! Hoo!' as deeply as possible. Each time you land, on the flats of your feet, let the sound hammer deep into the sex centre. Exhaust yourself completely.
- **Fourth stage, fifteen minutes:** Stop! Freeze wherever you are, in whatever position you find yourself. A cough, a movement—anything will dissipate the energy flow and the effort will be lost. Witness everything that is happening to you.
- **Fifth stage, fifteen minutes:** Celebrate through dance, expressing your gratitude towards the whole. Carry your happiness with you throughout the day.

If where you meditate prevents you from making a noise, here is a silent alternative: rather than shouting, let the catharsis in the second stage take place entirely through bodily movements. In the third stage, the sound 'Hoo' can be hammered silently inside.

Osho Kundalini Meditation™

Kundalini is like an energetic shower, softly shaking you free of your stress and leaving you refreshed. This meditation lasts for one hour and has four stages, three with music, and the last without.

- **First stage, fifteen minutes:** Be loose and let your whole body shake, feel the energies moving up from your feet. Let go everywhere and become the shaking. You can keep your eyes closed or open.
- **Second stage, fifteen minutes:** Dance, any way you feel, allow your body to move as it wishes. Again, your eyes can be open or closed.

- **Third stage, fifteen minutes:** Close your eyes and be still, sitting or standing, observing, witnessing, whatever is happening inside and out.
- **Fourth stage, fifteen minutes:** Keeping your eyes closed, lie down and be still.

Osho Nadabrahma Meditation™

Nadabrahma meditation lasts for one hour and has three stages. It helps in achieving harmony between mind and body by creating inner balance through humming and hand movements. This meditation can be done anytime during the day but it is important to have an empty stomach and remain inactive for at least fifteen minutes after the session is over.

- **First stage, thirty minutes:** Close your eyes and sit in a relaxed position. Begin humming keeping your lips closed. Your humming should be loud enough so that even if you are attending the session with others, they can hear you. This will create a vibration in your body. You can visualise a hollow tube or vessel filled only with the vibrations of the humming. A point will come when the humming continues by itself and you become the listener. Breathe normally, altering the pitch and slowly move your body, if you feel like doing it.
- **Second stage, fifteen minutes:** This stage is divided into two segments, of seven and a half minutes each. For the first part, move the hands, palms upwards, in an outward, circular motion. Starting at the navel, both hands move forward and then divide to make two large circles mirroring each other left and right. The movement should be so slow that at times there will appear to be no movement at all. Feel that you are giving energy to the universe. After seven and a half minutes, the music will change and you turn your palms

downwards, and start moving them in the opposite direction. Now the hands will come together towards the navel and divide outwards towards the side of the body. Feel that you are taking energy in. As in the first stage, do not inhibit any soft, slow movements of the rest of your body.

- **Third stage, fifteen minutes:** Sit absolutely quiet and still.

Osho Nataraj Meditation™

This dancing meditation is divided into three stages and the session generally lasts for sixty-five minutes. Disappearing in the dance on specifically created music, then relaxing into silence and stillness, is the route inside for this method.

- **First stage, forty minutes:** With eyes closed, dance as if possessed. Let your unconscious take over completely. Do not control your movements or witness what is happening.
- **Second stage, twenty minutes:** Keeping your eyes closed, lie down immediately. Be silent and still.
- **Third stage, five minutes:** Dance in celebration and enjoy.

Osho Gourishankar Meditation™

This meditation is practised at night and it consists of four stages lasting for fifteen minutes each. The first two stages are meant to prepare you for the spontaneous *latihan* of the third stage. If the breathing is done correctly in the first stage, the carbon dioxide formed in the bloodstream will make you feel as high as Gourishankar (Mt Everest).

- **First stage:** Sit with eyes closed. Inhale deeply through the nose, filling the lungs. Hold the breath till you feel comfortable; then exhale gently through the mouth, and keep the lungs empty for as long as possible. Continue the breathing cycle throughout this stage.

- **Second stage:** Return to normal breathing and with a gentle gaze look at a candle flame or a flashing blue light. Keep your body still.
- **Third stage:** With closed eyes, stand up and let your body be loose and receptive. Allow your body to move gently in whichever way it wants. Do not force any movement, allow it to happen gently and gracefully.
- **Fourth stage:** Lie down with closed eyes, silent and still.

Osho Mandala Meditation™

This is another powerful technique that creates a circle of energy, resulting in a natural centering. It comprises four stages, each stage lasting for fifteen minutes.

- **First stage:** With open eyes run on the spot, starting slowly and gradually, getting faster and faster. Bring your knees up as high as possible. Breathing deeply and evenly will move the energy within. Forget about your mind and body. Keep going.
- **Second stage:** Sit with your eyes closed and mouth open and loose. Gently rotate your body from the belly, like a reed blowing in the wind. Feel the wind blowing you from side to side, back and forth, around and around. This will bring your awakened energies to the navel centre.
- **Third stage:** Lie on your back, open your eyes and with the head still, rotate them in a clockwise direction. Sweep them fully around in the sockets as if you are following the second hand of a vast clock, but as fast as possible. It is important that the mouth remains open and the jaw relaxed, with the breath soft and even. This will bring centering energies to the third eye.
- **Fourth stage:** Close your eyes and be still.

Osho No Dimensions Meditation™

This is a powerful method for centering one's energy in the *hara*, the area just below the navel. It is based on a Sufi technique of movements for awareness and integration of the body. As it is a Sufi meditation, it is free and non-serious. In fact it is so non-serious that you can even smile while you are doing it.

This one hour meditation has three stages. During the first two stages the eyes are open but not focused on anything. During the third stage the eyes are closed.

The music, created especially for this meditation, begins slowly and gradually becomes faster and faster and acts as an uplifting force.

- **First stage, Sufi movements, thirty minutes:** A continuous dance in a set of six movements. With your eyes open, begin by standing in one place and placing the left hand on the heart and the right hand on the *hara*. Stand still for a few moments just listening to the music to get centered. This stage of the meditation starts slowly and builds up in intensity. If you are doing this with others you may get out of synchronicity with the others and think you have made a mistake. When that happens, just stop, see where the other people are, and then get back into the same rhythm and timing as everyone else. When the bell rings, start the sequence as described here. The movements always come from the centre, or *hara*, using the music to keep the correct rhythm. The hips and eyes face the direction of the hand movement. Use graceful movements in a continuous flow. Loud 'Shoo' sounds are made from the throat in synchronicity with the sounds from the recording. Repeat this six-movement sequence continuously for thirty minutes:
    - Touch the backs of the hands together pointing downward on the *hara*. Breathing in through the nose,

bring the hands up to the heart and fill them with love. Breathing out make the sound 'Shoo' from the throat and send love out to the world. At the same time move the right arm (with fingers extended, palm downward) and right foot straight forward, and move the left hand back down to the *hara*. Return to the original position with both hands on the *hara*.

- Repeat this movement with the left arm and foot. Return to the original position with both hands on the *hara*.
- Repeat this movement with the right arm and foot, turning sideways to the right. Return to the original position with both hands on the *hara*.
- Repeat this movement with the left arm and foot, turning sideways to the left. Return to the original position with both hands on the *hara*.
- Repeat this movement with the right arm and foot, turning directly behind from the right side. Return to the original position with both hands on the *hara*.
- Repeat this movement with the left arm and foot, turning directly behind from the left side. Return to the original position with both hands on the *hara*.

This stage is over when the music comes to a stop. The second stage begins with new music.

Second stage, whirling, fifteen minutes: Begin by placing the right toe over the left toe. Fold your arms across your chest and embrace yourself. Feel love for yourself. When the music starts bow down to existence for bringing you here for this meditation. When the tempo changes, begin whirling either to the left or to the right, whichever feels best for you. If you whirl to the right put the right foot and the right arm to the right and the left arm in the opposite direction. As you start to whirl you can change your hands to any position that feels good to you. If you have not

whirled before then go very, very slowly at first and once your mind and body get acclimated to the movements, the body will naturally go faster. Do not force yourself to move fast too soon. If you do get dizzy or it feels like it is too much for you, it is okay to stop and stand or to sit down. To end the whirling, slow down and fold the arms over the chest and heart.

- **Third stage, silence, fifteen minutes:** Lie down on the belly with your eyes closed. Leave your legs open and not crossed to allow all the energy you have gathered to flow through you. There is nothing to do except to just be with yourself. If it is uncomfortable to lie on your belly, lie on your back. A gong will indicate the end of the meditation.

Osho Whirling Meditation™

Sufi whirling is the most ancient and one of the most forceful techniques. One can notice the signs of change after the first experience itself. For maximum benefit, the key is to put the inner being in the centre with the body behaving like a potter's wheel.

- **First stage, forty-five minutes:** Keep your eyes open and feel the centre point of your body. Lift your arms to shoulder height, with the right hand palm up and the left hand low, palm down. Start turning around your own axis. Let your body be soft. Start slowly and after fifteen minutes gradually go faster and faster. You become a whirlpool of energy—the periphery a storm of movement but the witness at the centre silent and still.
- **Second stage, fifteen minutes:** Let your body fall to the ground when the music stops. (It may already have happened before.) Roll onto your stomach immediately so that your navel is in contact with the earth. Feel your body blending into the earth. Keep your eyes closed and remain passive and silent.

Spirituality/Self-help

'Sammasati,
remember you are a Buddha.'
—Osho

The Buddha never claimed to be anything other than an ordinary human being; he attributed his spiritual search and self-realisation to human effort, understanding and intelligence. But how many of us really take time out to reflect on our potential to usher fundamental changes in our lives and then more importantly, do something about it?

This profoundly written book, interspersed with quotes from various masters like Osho, reminds us that the seed of consciousness is already sown—it is our responsibility to make ourselves fertile with practises like meditation to let our true being sprout. The path to follow is of awareness, discovery and transformation.

Appa deepo bhava—we are all born with the possibility of becoming a light unto ourselves.

Dr Vasant Joshi has been in the academic field for over thirty years working in India and in the United States of America. He was a Visiting Professor, India Scholar Program in the Department of Religious Studies, Cleveland State University, Ohio. He has served on the faculty of University of California, Berkeley, and at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Immensely moved by Osho's vision, Dr Joshi went to Pune in 1975, and was initiated into *sannyas* by Osho, who named him Swami Satya Vedant. He was later appointed as Chancellor, Osho Multiversity by Osho himself. Dr Joshi has travelled worldwide giving lectures, presenting papers, participating in seminars and conferences and conducting meditation workshops.



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